MANDATED LITERACY PROGRAMS: HOW TEACHERS REACT

By

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by

Nancy Rankie Shelton

This dissertation is dedicated to children in schools across America who suffer through unwarranted, overemphasized skill instruction while we professional educators are forced by politicians to remove our focus from you to The Test.

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MANDATED LITERACY PROGRAMS: HOW TEACHERS COPE AND THE IMPACT ON STUDENTS

By

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The current political climate in education emphasizes the need to improve test scores of students and to use these scores to increase the accountability measures pressure on schools. In focusing our attention on test scores, we often lose sight of the classroom. The teachers and students in the classrooms have been silenced, forgotten, and left to fend for themselves after the external mandates have been imposed on them.

This qualitative study describes the teaching experiences of four classrooms in an elementary school where the literacy program was mandated by the principal. The participating teachers were engaged in efforts to provide instruction for their students that met the demands of the administration, at the same time that they struggled with their understanding of the literacy needs of their students. An analysis of the teachers' understanding of literacy development and how best to support its development in the classroom did not match the content and structure of literacy program they were required

to implement. The conflicts that the teachers struggled with are identified and the classroom experiences that resulted from imposed curriculum are described.

The findings of this research indicate that when teachers do not approve of the mandated program it is unlikely that the program will enhance literacy learning. A second finding is that when teachers do not fully understand the administration's motivation in mandating literacy programs, the work environment becomes negative. A third finding suggests that when attempting to select a commercial reading program, it is important to adequately consider the values, beliefs, and expertise of the classroom teachers who will be charged with implementing that program and delivering reading instruction.

CHAPTER 1
BACKGROUND FOR THE STUDY

> We live at a time when the greatest threats to education come not from the obvious difficulties with the funding of schools and the ubiquity of testing, but from the attempt to transform education into a business, students into human development capital, and teachers into mindless "production line" workers. Reading, writing, and literature are transformed into achievement test scores. (Bloome & Harste, 2001, p. 38)

The national spotlight is on education. A focus has been placed on improving reading performance nationwide, with a notion that testing is the key to increasing performance of students and teachers. Decisions on how to improve academic performance of students are being taken away from the education community as politicians cry for school reform that equates to increased testing. Pressure is being placed on educators to use "proven programs" to increase reading performance of students, federal and state funding is being limited to schools that implement "proven programs" and voucher systems are gaining growing support throughout the nation as viable alternatives to free, public education.

The current efforts to control teaching through testing creates "a constant battle for the control of classrooms between educational programmers and testers who want to hold teachers accountable for delivering instruction in the misguided manner they think children are best taught, and teachers who know there is a better way" (Smith, 1986, p. 195-6). According to Smith, forcing teachers into programmatic instruction is not new to education, it is a symptom of the all too disturbing fact that "the unspoken assumption behind the production and promotion of all programmatic instruction is that someone

outside the classroom can make better decisions than the teacher in the classroom" (p. 125). Forced change in reading education in the form of mandated commercial reading programs has come into the schools in an attempt to take over the minds and methodologies of teachers. Mandating instructional approaches marginalizes professional educators (Ford, 2001) and is in direct contrast to what we know about the need for teachers to develop the beliefs that support their methodology, and the importance in recognizing the power of the *teacher's* belief system (Giroux, 1992; Short & Burke, 1996; Sleeter, 1996).

Graves's (2001) research into the source of energy teachers use to continue being successful in stressfully demanding assignments has defined positive influences educators can tap to move towards "practicing in communities of mutual dependence and vision" (p. 10). The divergent goals that teachers and administrators have was made real in his research, pointing out that teachers believe "it is exhausting to see so many decisions made without the best interests of kids in mind" (p. 17). Executing curriculum decisions is ultimately the teacher's responsibility, as accountability is based on *student* performance, and Graves suggests teachers must "ask tough, persistent questions of our colleagues and administrators if current approaches to curriculum are not to drain us completely" (p. 59).

While educators most often have the best interest of the students in mind when making curriculum decisions, administrators are influenced by public policy, which is directly influenced by public opinion and public law. The policy making process is shaped by countless people and social forces (Lindblom & Woodhouse, 1993). This is problematic because "the mind at its best simply cannot grasp the complexity of social

reality" (p. 5). Yet teachers are expected to balance the social and practical realities of curriculum reform. Legislative interference is increasing rather than decreasing in some states with methods such as a new school grading criterion that ranks schools even more harshly than in the past (Florida Department of Education, 2001). Political action that guides educational reform and increases accountability in the form of high-stakes assessment pressures teachers, for they are the closest professional to the children and have the weakest voice in political decisions:

> Boards of education and superintendents of schools are exercising more top-down judgments that transcend the boundaries of policy to affect instructional decisions. In short, more judgments are made distant from the child based on financial consideration, state laws, and the possibility of legal action without monitoring the emotional effect on the classroom teacher. (Graves, p. 61)

The purpose of this qualitative study is to examine how curriculum decisions made with accountability measures as the guiding force affect teachers and students. The report presents evidence to show how teachers seek to find a balance among the divergent interests of the policy makers and school administrators, their own beliefs about how reading should be taught, and what the reading experiences are for students within this political context. This research examines teachers' beliefs about how literacy develops in children, and provides evidence that supports the notion that a teacher's emotional well-being is at stake when new policy decisions are mandated that are not congruent with the teacher's existing paradigms and literacy beliefs and practices.

My interest in this research topic is linked to recent research conclusions suggesting that teaching-learning activities are more than simple procedural recipes that can be gathered together in simplistic "teacher cookbooks" to be successfully used by all teachers in all classrooms to promote and support literacy learning (Cambourne, 2001).

Furthermore, since students' literacy identities are formed by the epistemology of the teacher when students are engaged in literacy activities in the classroom (Johnston et al., 2001), the need exists to explore the connection between the teacher's epistemology and practice when it stands in opposition to administrative decisions.

What is Literacy?

The problem in literacy curriculum stems from the fact that it is extremely difficult to define literacy. In its simplistic form, literacy is the ability to read and to write. For many, literacy is defined as the ability to *communicate* in oral and written forms of language. In much the same way that Vygotsky (1978) situates thinking within the historic context of what comes before, during and after the construction of thought, Bruner (1986) posits that education and language are historically and socially situated:

> I shall begin with a premise that is already familiar: that the medium of exchange in which education is conducted – language – can never be neutral, that it imposes a point of view not only about the world to which it refers but toward the use of mind in respect of this world. Language necessarily imposes a perspective in which things are viewed and a stance toward what we view. (p. 121)

Bruner places heavy emphasis on the social nature of learning. He argues that learning how to use language is not merely a cognitive process that occurs in a vacuum. Simply memorizing a dictionary and the syntactical rules of a language can never produce a competent language user. Language is more than a list of words put in an order that follows a set of rules; learning how to use a language involves learning the culture and appropriate ways to communicate within that culture.

Bruner (1986) also views the language of education relative to his view of knowledge as social construction. Partly adopting Nelson Newman's notion of multiple possible worlds, he suggests that knowledge is of a hypothetical nature as its reality is based on the "given world" that society takes for granted. Bruner maintains that teachers

should adopt a stance towards subject matter that communicates to students the fact that knowledge is not an indisputable truth that is somewhere out there. On the contrary, inherent in knowledge is an uncertainty and an invitation for further thought. According to Bruner, a teacher should be "a human event, not a transmission device" (p.126). If teaching were an act of transmission of factual knowledge, there would be a single interpretation, a right and a wrong interpretation of literary text. According to Bruner, Nicholas of Lyra proposed many centuries ago that even biblical texts are amenable to four levels of interpretation: the literal, the ethical, the historical and the mystical. Bruner makes the point that no text, no story can be understood at a single level.

Literacy, therefore, is defined by the context in which the term is used, and the goal one has for its uses. To be literate can be understood simply as the ability to read and write, or it can be defined as a much more complex system of communication that is layered with meaning and interpretation.

Statement of the Problem

Literacy education in the United States continues the historical struggle to find balance in the various conflicts within literacy instruction. These tensions are played out in the ongoing disagreement in reading and language arts instruction and the continued struggle to accommodate multiple perspectives in our reading curriculums. Disagreement in how language is learned and opposing views of what constitutes knowledge precipitated the struggle between conflicting traditions in the reading curriculum. As far back as 1895, opposing views of language curriculum were evident in "The Report of the Sub-committee on the Correlation of Studies in Elementary Education," which became known as the "Committee of Fifteen." While the committee

introduced the "Language studies" discussion stating "there is first to be noted the prominent place of language study that takes the form of reading, penmanship, and grammar in the first eight years' work of the school" (p. 44), the committee also recognized that "the most practical knowledge of all, it will be admitted, is a knowledge of human nature – a knowledge that enables one to combine with his fellow-men and to share with them the physical and spiritual wealth of the race" (p. 47). And so the debates in reading curriculum were staged. On one side are the formalists, positivists, and the "scientific movement" whose theories are rooted in the behaviorist perspective; on the other side is the progressive education movement, rooted in a constructivist perspective, which stems from the work of Dewey.

Dewey, who is considered the father of progressive education, saw the world as a qualitative place. Dewey believed that "one central criterion of truly educational experiences is continuity" (quoted in Newkirk, 1989, p. 204). He believed that learning should be built from a child's experience and interest, that students should be directed into challenging and purposeful activities, and that the teacher is a key player who enables students to "develop the attitudes, competences, and base knowledge that will promote development" (p. 204). The social constructivist theory follows this tradition and posits that education should be catered to the individual, that it should be "constructed" through active interaction.

Unlike the social constructivist theory, "*Formalism* [italics in the original] is the belief that teaching can be reduced to a technology; that is to say, that research can tell us what the most effective teaching methods are in any given situation and teachers can learn these techniques" (Webb & Sherman, 1989, p. 158). Formalists support the notion

that literacy learning can be reduced to learning a series of reading, writing and speaking skills. Following the formalist tradition, Hirsch (1988) insists that he "takes no position about the methods of initial reading instruction beyond insisting that content must receive as much emphasis as 'skill'" (p.1) at the same time that he presents an intricate case that reading comprehension is dependent on the ability to retrieve "specific schemata already stored in memory" that "instantly facilitates the cognitive task." More specifically he insists that in order for students to be able to understand a text, the reader must first have memorized the schemata that the reader will encounter in the text. According to Hirsch, "Good reading… requires the rapid deployment of schemata that have already been acquired and do not have to be worked out on the spot" (p. 63). Formalists believe that in order to become literate, students need to build a full bank of skills and that students should "receive" these skills as a base for learning.

Further complicating the struggle between reading instruction traditions was the passage of the Reading Excellence Act (REA), the National Institute of Child Health and Human Development's (NICHD) release of the National Reading Panel Summary (1999b), and that passage of No Child Left Behind (NCLB) legislation which all promote phonics as the most important component in reading development. The REA redefined reading and attached all REA funding to mandatory use of its definition. The National Reading Panel Summary declares skill emphasis as the critical foundation needed for reading development and calls for the immediate application of this belief in classrooms nationwide. Utilizing packaged reading programs that promote systematic skill instruction that focus primarily on phonics has become the response preferred by the

United States Department of Education under the Reading First initiative that followed NCLB legislation.

Purpose of the Study

The purpose of this study is to document four teachers' understanding of literacy development in children, to describe their reading instruction as it is influenced by a mandated program, to investigate their perception of outside decision-making, high-stakes testing and accountability, and finally to describe the varying levels of compliance within the classrooms as the teachers provided reading experiences to their students. My goals are to identify factors that enable teachers to retain some measure of control over the curriculum or prevent them from doing so, to explain the emotional process teachers go through attempting to provide meaningful reading experiences for students, and to discuss this process in the context of student learning.

Significance of the Study

There is a conflict between school-based educators' beliefs and mandated reading programs present in schools throughout Florida and across the country as more and more states enact accountability legislation that focuses on test scores. This study investigates whether teachers are able to keep the interests and instructional needs of their students as their central focus while they also work to comply with various externally imposed mandates and policy changes that impact instructional decision-making at their school. Changes observed in Florida (as well as other states) include but are not limited to the following:

- accountability measures which are used for school-based financial incentives
- teacher salaries dependent on student performance

- adoption of instructional methodologies that may not agree with what teachers believe is in the students' best interest
- student retention decisions based on single test scores
- administrative mandating of scripted literacy programs

This research seeks to understand the impact of such policies on teachers and to identify key factors that may enable teachers to better deal with the growing political pressure in reading instruction that accompanies newly mandated curriculum that tries to force reform. Research has extensively covered many topics in reform (Bascia & Hargreaves, 2000), but what has not yet been well established is the effect that mandated reading instruction might have on classroom environments and teachers' work. This research describes how the political climate impacts student learning, specifically in relationship to reading instruction, in a climate of high-stakes testing. Furthermore, the emotional aspects of teaching in an environment of mandated change is absent from the reform literature (Hargreaves, 1998). This research addresses the emotional response of the teachers in this study towards the mandated curriculum in their school.

CHAPTER 2
REVIEW OF LITERATURE

> The end goals of education are not only academic but also social and personal. Schools can contribute to the development of human beings… who can conceive of ways to change not only themselves but also the world. (Langer, 1995, p. 143)

The major presumption of this research is that the current political climate has imposed pedagogy in reading education which may or may not be consistent with what teachers believe to be best practice. This review of literature starts with an explanation of recent political action which has influenced reading education in elementary schools across Florida. Because political pressure imposed on schools calls for school reform and teacher change, a brief review of teacher change is presented. How the policies affect reading instruction is the focus of this research. Conflicts exist when teachers' beliefs in reading instruction do not match the mandated programs. In the context of recent political trends, the primary conflict is located in the philosophical difference between mandated programmatic instruction and the social constructivist perspective of reading development. Consequently, this literature review includes an explanation of the social constructivist perspective of reading development and how that differs from the behaviorist, or functionalist, skill-based perspective.

Political Climate

At a meeting of the American Federation of Teachers' Program and Policy Council, in October 1997, speakers Gary Sykes and Joan Baratz-Snowden discussed the need to refocus literacy education in the United States. The presentation notes, provided by the American Federation of Teachers, state that teacher education is ineffective in properly

preparing teachers, and that reading instruction should focus on the National Institute of Child Health and Human Development (NICHD) research findings. The NICHD findings as summarized at the meeting include the following major tenets:

- Children must have phonemic awareness, phonics and automaticity in applying phoneme and phonics skills to comprehend a text.
- Children also need vocabulary upon which to build and the ability to relate words and ideas to previous knowledge.
- Reading is not natural.
- Children cannot predict unknown words from context (AFT, 1997, p. 3).

At the conclusion of this meeting, the AFT recommended that its members

> engage the public on this issue by publicizing the data from the NICHHD research findings and translating those findings so that public understanding is heightened and tolerance for non-research based decisions is minimized. We need to work with policy makers, including state legislatures and boards of education, to bring the issue and the effective resolution of the issue to the forefront. (p. 4)

The Federation's website (www.aft.org) and the Federation's journal, *American Educator,* provided information that kept the spotlight on poor teachers and illiterate students. A 1998 "Resolution on Improving Teacher Quality," still posted on the website in 2003, stated "A glance at the current process of teacher education, licensure, and continuous professional development reveals a system in flux, generally devoid of high standards and in serious need of improvement" (AFT, 2002). The AFT, through publications that praise programmatic reading instruction, links teacher quality directly to poor student achievement, and is supportive of measures that promote programmatic instruction:

> Some of the news from the field is promising. A few schools, even a few districts such as Inglewood, Calif.--which serve many low-income students on free and reduced-price lunch--have made inroads into the test score gap. And some reading programs like Open Court, Success for All, and Direct Instruction have, when well implemented, raised reading skills (decoding)--up to a point. (Hirsch, 2001, p. 6)

This direct praise of scripted reading programs coupled with the comment "when well implemented" infers that low test scores are a result of poor implementation of proven programs. Hirsch's tone and position impact reading policy. The article, which is printed in a publication supported by teachers' union dues, blames the reading gap on language deficiency--a "verbal gap" caused by a vocabulary deficit. According to Hirsch, a simple remedy to the problem is intensive academic standards. Hirsch argues that this requires "providing an explicit, coherent, and carefully cumulative approach to a broad range of knowledge and language" (p. 7). This article demonstrates the major characteristics of a manifesto. Its tone is all knowing, and it is directed at teachers as an authoritative, trusted source that disseminates information. The AFT agreed to promote this rhetoric in a political effort to change teachers and teaching in the spirit of the 1997 policy meeting summarized above. No references to the research are offered to support any of the statements made by Hirsch.

Programmatic instruction is in the forefront in policy discussions. Publishing statements in newspapers and press releases, supporters of systematic sequential skill instruction have repeatedly called negative attention to reading education. The headlines below from *Newsweek Magazine*, *Senate Press Releases*, and *Policy Review*, a Heritage Foundation publication, are indicative of such publications:

> "Millions of kids" cannot read (Wingert & Kantrowitz, 1997).
>
> "Parents and teachers… are frustrated and confused about what method of reading instruction is best" (Thad Cochran Press Release, 1997).
>
> *"See Dick Flunk: The evidence is overwhelming that kids with reading problems need phonics-based instruction. Why aren't educators getting the message?"* [Italics in the original] (Palmaffy, 1997).

Actually, inside the education community, there are many who believe that the attention to reading failure is a created myth. Among them is Linda Lee of the Washington Chapter of Friends of Reading, who challenges the existence of a reading crisis. She questions whether the National Assessment of Educational Progress (NAEP) *is* a "pattern of poor performance." In fact, Lee points out that the NAEP "reported scores for 9- and 13- year-olds on the 1996 assessment are significantly higher than scores on the first assessment, given in 1971" (p. 4).

Another disbeliever of the "reading crisis" is Frank Smith (1986), who argues that testing was introduced to *act* as a filter for minority students and has been used to *limit* their educational opportunities since its inception. With studies showing that children who do not do well on tests receive less attention in school and in educational programs, Smith creates a convincing case that the educational programs mandated to help the struggling students actually limit their creative thinking and expression. Recent efforts to test and sort kids is consciously used to maintain the our schools' current power structure:

> A number of recent studies and investigations, like those of the National Commission on Secondary Education for Hispanics and the National Board of Inquiry Into Schools, have seen the pursuit of excellence as a not-to-subtle means of discriminating against disadvantaged populations. Children who do not do well on tests receive less attention in school and in educational programs. Beverly P. Cole, principal of an alternative school in New York, believes that standardized tests, with their "narrow and rigid" definition of how children should be able to exhibit their knowledge, determine whether schools see children as "okay" or not. "In the process we damage all children--we devalue the variety of strengths they bring with them to school. All differences become handicaps." James Vasquez, superintendent of schools in the Edgewood School District of San Antonio, declares, "The prevailing attitude in the school system is that you develop excellence through exclusivity. In the past, when poor and minority kids were kept out of the school, test scores were high. Now people are saying, "Let's exclude them again and the scores will go up and we can all boast that American education is in great shape." (p.161)

According to Smith, the intent is clear, use tests as markers for a particular group of children, or really a subgroup of our society. Ultimately, control through testing lowers standards and reduces learning expectations. Failure hurts students emotionally for "learning is never divorced from feelings--and neither is failing to learn" (Smith, p.60). In her work with Laotian immigrants, Fu (1995) found that even the perception of academic inability was enough to marginalize students, causing them to be more rejected and to fall even further behind. Her work with ESOL students personalizes the alienation felt by students who are forced into programmatic instruction and who are not given the opportunity to engage in meaningful learning experiences because of their perceived poor ability.

The current attack on reading instruction is focused on phonics instruction. Educational psychologist Gerald Coles (2000) has re-examined the research that supports phonics instruction as the basic element in reading development. Coles finds that beginning with the passage of the Reading Excellence Act (H.R.2514) in October 1998, the formal definition adopted in the REA of reading, reading instruction, and "reliable" research started to change the face of reading education. The REA defines reading instruction as "teaching skills and knowledge to understand how phonemes, or speech sounds, are connected to print" and "the ability to decode unfamiliar words," and calls for instructional practices to be derived from "scientifically based reading research" (p. xv). "Scientific research" is defined by the NICHD (1999a) to include only the studies that rely on quantitative research methods, where measurable skills are the focus of the research, thereby eliminating all qualitative research and any "holistic" description of literacy experiences or development which looks at the individual differences and

uniqueness of learners. Coles's reanalysis of the data "scientific research" uses to support phonics instruction reveals inaccurate representations of research results. More specifically, he finds that the "scientific research" is flawed and even distorted to support reading programs that provide very limited instructional measures that do not take into account the "numerous facets of children's lives that vitally influence their literacy achievement" (p. 100). The research which claims to be "scientific" is neither neutral nor objective. Coles contends that, among other flaws, the supporters of scientific research exclude explanations and theories that do not emphasize systematic, sequential skill instruction, that disregard all out-of-school contributions or hindrances to learning, and consider independent, limited skill acquisition as "reading."

Coles maintains that a child's social class has a major impact on language development and he calls for researchers and policy-makers to "address societal inequities that are inseparable from how children learn" (p. 105). This point is critically important in the climate of high-stakes assessment. This is especially true in Florida, for the reading programs being implemented across the state promote improved test scores for struggling learners. Invariably, such programs are adopted by high poverty schools whose students do poorly on standardized tests. Because of their low test scores, schools face punitive measures that include publicizing test scores, identifying students and schools for remediation, denial of promotion and graduation, and school take-overs (Elmore & Fuhrman, 2001). This situation is aggravated by the fact that Florida has placed a tremendous weight on the performance of lower performing students in their funding formula as noted by the Florida Department of Education:

> The amendment to Rule 6A-1.09981, Implementation of Florida's System of School Improvement and Accountability, delineates an enhanced approach to the

> grading of Florida's public schools. This is a substantive rule change as a result of new statutory language that specifies that each school's grade must be based upon three primary criteria: student achievement scores, student learning gains, and improvement in the lowest 25% of the students in the school. (http://www.firn.edu)

As noted by Weaver and Geske (1997), state departments of education can shape educational policy. "The governor's office can wield considerable influence on a variety of education policies and in particular on school funding issues" (p. 315). Florida's Governor Jeb Bush exercises his policy shaping power by keeping accountability formulas and funding in a state of constant change. Florida's "A+ Plan" (Bush & Brogan, 1999) mandates education policy and controls state funding for education based primarily on Florida Comprehensive Assessment Test (FCAT) scores. FCAT scores are used to assign "School Grades." Since its inception, the criteria for grading in the A+ Plan have been continuously revised. Recommendations unanimously adopted by the Florida Department of Education in December 2001 forewarned that more changes would follow:

> The additions to the rule define achievement levels for those grade and subject combinations that have been added to the FCAT since its initiation in 1998. Further, the rule provides initial achievement levels effective until 2003 and a second, more difficult, set of levels to become effective in 2004. (Florida Department Of Education, undated)

In the A+ Plan, school grading criteria are critically important because of the funding attached to grade achievement. Bonuses of $100 per student are awarded to "A" schools and to schools that improve by at least one letter grade from one school year to the next. Funding for professional development is provided to implement "proven programs" and approved staff development in struggling schools, leaving administrators with little choice but to implement government sponsored reading programs. With mandatory retention for third grade students who do not pass the FCAT (see

http://firn.edu/doe/commhome/progress/proghome.htm for details) and sixty-eight schools receiving an "F" grade in 2002 (Florida Department of Education, 2002a), a frenzy has been created around low test scores, leaving school-based administrators scrambling for "quick fixes" to their perilous positions. Scripted reading programs are marketed with claims of increased test scores for all who follow their programs. Within this mayhem, scripted reading programs have been offered to school administrators as a guaranteed road to salvation.

The concurrent movement toward "scientific reading research" exasperates the problems for reading teaching and policy (Allington & Woodside-Jiron, 1999). Both research and school-based performance assessments must measure reading skills in some standard way if their goal is to guide and inform practice. By their own admission, researchers of skill-based programs fail to report significant reading improvement in phonics and skill-based programs, and they acknowledge that integrated learning and application of phonemic skills evident in authentic reading and writing activities are not measurable according to *their coding system* (Allington & Woodside-Jiron, 1999). Coding systems that rely heavily on decontextualized skills and reading programs that focus on skills at the expense of comprehension distort successful reading development that exists in meaningful context.

The concern for reliance on such programs has increased since the National Reading Panel (NRP) released its report in April 2000. The report focuses on limited topics in teaching reading that included alphabetics, fluency, comprehension, teacher education and reading instruction, and computer technology and reading instruction. The reasoning for this limitation is provided in the report's introduction: "The panel elected to

examine these and the subordinate questions because they currently reflect the central issues in reading instruction and reading achievement" (NICHD, 1999a, p. 1:3). A brief description of the process NRP undertook to reach this conclusion is shared; however, no numerical data are offered supporting its conclusion that these topics were indeed the central issues in reading instruction before the report was released. However, the report itself has become a central issue in reading education, in part because of the limited topics it chose to examine in spite of the panel's own cautions: "The panel's silence on other topics should not be interpreted as indicating that other topics have no importance or that improvement in those areas would not lead to greater reading achievement" (p. 1:3).

The report has become a battleground for literacy scholars and legislatures. There is growing concern centered around the effect of the report on reading instruction. As noted by Allington (2002), "This report is now being widely cited (and distorted) in the quest to reshape reading instruction" (p. 40). The reverberations of the decisions being made based on the report's limited view of reading have been felt by all members of the education community as mandates are emerging that expect classroom teachers to act upon the report's narrow topics in reading. This is in part because "the mandates aren't really about improved curriculum materials as much as they are about asserting external authority and ideological control over the education process" (Allington, 2002, p. 33). This problem is more pronounced for some educators than it is for others. The participants of the research presented in this study were greatly influenced by "the barrage of pressure to focus on word level skills alone--on the alphabetics that were so emphasized in the National Reading Panel's report" (Pressley et al., 2002, p. 77) because

they teach in Florida where the governor, Jeb Bush, "seems to have been convinced" that reading instruction should adhere to the narrow topics put forth by the National Reading Panel (Allington, 2002).

Policy and Teacher Change

Education has always been shaped by federal, state and district policy (Goertz, 2001), which varied in ways that create normal tensions that are "at the heart of variations in policy and practice" (p. 66). In the past, federal policy circumvented state education policy, but the new federal plan was "designed to support and be integrated with state and local reform initiatives" (p. 63). According to Goertz, in 1990, when President Bush's federal policy shifted the emphasis from inputs, holding states accountable for providing services, to outcomes, or student test scores, state and local policy changes were expected to accommodate the federal shift to standards-based accountability. As Goertz points out, differences between federal and state policies are indicative of the degree of flexibility or uniformity within state systems, which influences district policy and extend all the way to how individual schools set goals. When there is variation between federal and state policy, state policy can allow variation within districts that embrace new policies while conforming to new federal regulations. Districts and schools are then able to set attainable and reasonable goals that match their student population. Comparing two counties, Dade County and Union County, illustrates how variation in Florida's plan might be useful. In Dade County 26.6% of the elementary students are Limited English Proficient (LEP), while in Union County only 0.2% of the students are LEP (Florida Department of Education, 2003a). A state plan that allows variation would "reflect differences in state demographics, political culture, educational governance structures

and policies, and educational performances" (Goertz, p. 64) which, in turn, would allow variation in instructional methods that address specific populations of students and their educational needs.

However, Florida's plan shows little variation from the federal plan, and allows no variation at the district level. Every student in every school, in all 67 districts is treated with the same plan. Many educators oppose the lack of flexibility in Florida's plan; however, they have no voice in the decision-making process. The State of Florida maintains that changes to state policy "have been drafted following consideration of a wide range of input from various stakeholders" (Florida Department of Education, 2001). However, there are no real opportunities for teachers to participate in formal policy making efforts. Despite the fact that teachers have no real power in shaping policy, the current reform efforts in Florida are directed at changing teachers' practice (Datnow & Castellano, 2000). Research in school reform shows that government mandates aimed at specific changes in teaching and learning are not uncommon, yet they often fail to understand the complexities of education (Bascia & Hargreaves, 2000). According to Bascia and Hargreaves, in order for reform to be successful the agents of change must recognize that "a largely one-dimensional way as a set of skills, beliefs, and behaviors that can and must be changed" is not applicable in educational settings (p. 4). Teaching and learning are complex interactions yet "reformers rarely recognize that what must be changed is an interconnected, highly complex and profoundly political system which shapes and constrains the work of teaching and efforts to improve or transform it" (p. 4).

Change does not always come from within the education community, as can be witnessed by the growing trend to legislate reading instruction thereby politicizing

reading instruction methodology (Paterson, 2002). In his study designed to analyze the depth of this politicization, Paterson found that "from 1990 to 1997, 101 bills were introduced into state legislatures" (p. 159), with fifty "related to the use of phonics as an instructional methodology" (p. 160). In addition, Paterson notes that very few of the bills even mentioned reading comprehension. When it was mentioned it was either "a single phrase or sentence without descriptors, usually as part of a list of several phrases or sentences describing various aspects of phonics instruction" (p. 164). Legislators are by and large lawyers, not educators, legislating their version of reading instruction.

Educators are trying to resist legislated reading instruction, but in so doing, they find themselves in perilous positions. Garan (2002) points out that the "barrage of criticism" leaves teachers unsure of their teaching, lowering their confidence to the point that they question their own pedagogical knowledge and effectiveness. Public criticism regarding low test scores has led to increased public rewards and punishments for teachers. A system of rewards and punishment shifts the focus on teaching from the once intrinsic reward that motivates teachers to extrinsic rewards imposed upon teachers and students for high test scores and further exasperates the problem:

> Extrinsic motivation is not merely different or inferior; it's corrosive. That is, it tends to undermine intrinsic motivation. Under most life-like conditions, these two forms of motivation are likely to be reciprocally related. Someone acting to avoid punishment is apt to lose interest in that which he was threatened into doing. Teaching and learning alike come to be seen as less appealing when someone has a gun to your head. (Kohn, 2000, p. 22)

When teachers are constantly criticized for their inability to raise test scores of their students, they often succumb to the political pressure, changing their instructional practice to meet political demands. These conditions alter their emotional state, for

Table 2-1. Four Dimensions of Teaching and Their Relationship to Change (Bascia & Hargreaves, 2000, p. 4-14)

Dimension of Teaching	Description of Dimension	Welcomed Change	Impact of Forced Technical Change
Technical	"Teacher as Technician" Teaching is understood to be procedures that are clearly defined, and should be executed correctly	Teachers are interested in implementing a new program	Lessens professionalism and commitment to their work Acts on a narrow, restricted view of teaching and learning
Intellectual	"Teacher as Scholar" Teaching is complex, intellectual work that requires knowledge, expertise, reflection and continuous learning	Change is a result of teacher's growth and increased knowledge, which is applied in the classroom by the teacher	Short term behavioral compliance No intellectual growth "Teacher-proof curricula" is seen as an effort to "dumb down the teacher"
Socioemotional	"Teacher as Socializer" Continuous relationships with students, colleagues and communities are foundational to high-quality teaching and learning	Teachers are responsive to the needs of the children and continuously change to meet these needs	Implementing detailed curriculum requirements disconnects teachers and students Deadens emotional understanding between teacher and student
Sociopolitical	"Teacher as Decision-maker" Teachers are involved in school-based curriculum development, leadership, unions, and advisory councils exerting some degree of control and influence	Teachers who have a grasp of the frontline realities of teaching work to change in an effort to create positive contributions to the school and make important contributions to their school communities	Renders all teachers powerless, as decisions are made by others

neither teacher nor students are devoid of emotions, in fact, it is the emotional aspect of teaching that often identifies effective teachers (Graves, 2001).

Forced change, according to the research summarized by Bascia and Hargreaves (2000), comes in the form of new programs prescribed on the basis of so-called scientific evidence. They report that these programs are identified and prescribed by policy makers, not teachers, and that those efforts to change fail. Teachers, on the other hand, have their own conceptualization of what teaching is, and this varies among members of the profession. Teachers have ideologies that guide their practice. Reform measures that prescribe programs for teachers ignore these ideologies forcing all teachers into the "technical" ideology. Table 2-1 summarizes Bascia and Hargreaves's findings that situate teaching and teachers in four ideological categories and summarizes the effects of forced change on each.

As Bascia and Hargreaves note, in spite of the known negative effect on teaching and learning, reform efforts continue to be based on the "dominant technical model" which is forced on teachers and students. Bascia and Hargreaves summarize another body of reform research that attempts to explain why, in light of this knowledge, forced technical change continues to be a major push in educational reform efforts. According to the research, the persistence lies "in the systemic, contextual and political nature of public education and people's attempts to control and change it" (p. 15). The political climate discussed in this literature review reveals the uphill battle for the teachers and students in Florida.

Reading Instruction

The International Reading Association (IRA) is "the major professional organization concerned with literacy" (Armbruster 7 Osborn, 2002, p. vi). It is comprised of leading researchers, theorists and educators. Formed in 1956, its membership has grown to include over 90,000 educators representing 100 countries (We teach the world to read, 2002) who are "dedicated to promoting high levels of literacy for all by improving the quality of reading instruction, disseminating research and information about reading, and encouraging the lifetime reading habit" (IRA, 1996-2003). The IRA provides a comprehensive yet concise definition of reading:

> Reading is a complex system of deriving meaning from print that requires all of the following:
>
> - the development and maintenance of a motivation to read
> - the development of appropriate active strategies to construct meaning from print
> - sufficient background information and vocabulary to foster reading comprehension
> - the ability to read fluently
> - the ability to decode unfamiliar words
> - the skills and knowledge to understand how phonemes or speech sounds are connected to print. (Using multiple methods of beginning reading instruction, 2002)

The IRA not only provides this definition of reading, it also identifies what an excellent reading teacher knows and practices. The IRA's perspective is that "every child deserves excellent reading teachers because teachers make a difference in children's reading achievement and motivation to read" (IRA, 2000). Included in the description of "critical

qualities of knowledge and practice" are research supported characteristics of excellent reading teachers:

> They understand reading and writing development, and believe all children can learn to read and write.
>
> They continually assess children's individual progress and relate reading instruction to children's previous experience.
>
> They know a variety of materials and texts for children to read.
>
> They use flexible grouping strategies to tailor instruction to individual students.
>
> They are good reading "coaches" (that is, they provide help strategically). (IRA, 2000)

The qualities identified by the IRA are extensive, covering content knowledge, pedagogy, and classroom management as well as addressing the components of reading as outlined in the definition of reading. Together with the National Council of Teachers of English (NCTE), the IRA (2003) developed twelve standards for elementary teachers. While the standards can be listed, the IRA and NCTE urge teachers to understand that the twelve competencies are interrelated and not distinct, separate qualities. It is expected that teachers enable students to be competent in reading, writing and speaking in ways that enable them to acquire new information, respond to language in many forms, read and write for a variety of purposes, both academic and personal, and to understand cultural and linguistic diversity which in some cases means to use their first language to develop standard English. The IRA has also identified sixteen standards for reading professionals, as well as a matrix that defines the competencies expected for reading specialists, coordinators and teacher educators. The standards fall within three broad areas important to reading instruction: knowledge and beliefs about reading; instruction and assessment; and organizing and enhancing a reading program.

The definition of reading has not come under much scrutiny in the latest reform movement, for this is the one area where there seems to be a general consensus (Ransom et al., 1999) though it is slightly different from the REA's definition of reading, mostly in the order of its elaborated points:

> The Reading Excellence Act's definition of reading, which must be used by all schools that implement reading strategies under REA, is as follows:
>
> The term 'reading' means a complex system of deriving meaning from print that requires all of the following:
>
> A. The skills and knowledge to understand how phonemes, or speech sounds, are connected to print.
>
> B. The ability to decode unfamiliar words.
>
> C. The ability to read fluently.
>
> D. Sufficient background information and vocabulary to foster reading comprehension
>
> E. The development of appropriate active strategies to construct meaning from print.
>
> F. The development and maintenance of a motivation to read." Section 2252 (4) (United States Department of Education, 2001)

Close comparison of the two definitions, one provided by the IRA and the other provided by REA, reveal that the major difference is not the overall content, but rather the order of the elaborated skills listed that are required to derive meaning from print. Disagreement lies in the definitions of teaching and in recommending how students meet the competencies required to engage in the very complex process of reading.

In the programmatic instruction brought about by political pressure to change, reading is treated as a set of skills. Furthermore, the skills have been reduced to the limited components that the National Reading Panel addresses with a heavy emphasis on the alphabetic principles. The programs teach phonetic skills as prerequisites to reading

and writing which are taught out of context rather than within the act of reading and writing. Teachers are being asked to focus on skill development rather than meaningful reading experiences. It is this decontextualized teaching that separates many educators from those who support programmatic skills instruction. As noted in the standards set forth by the IRA, reading professionals consider alphabetics, vocabulary development and comprehension critically necessary but only a piece of the whole picture. In fact, alphabetics, vocabulary and comprehension instruction are specifically detailed within the twelve standards for elementary teachers and the sixteen standards that the IRA considers essential for reading educators.

This research describes teachers mandated to use a skill-based reading program. The teachers' personal philosophies of literacy development are explored. Therefore, the remainder of this section explores the broader meaning of literacy and reveals how it is developed in the classroom from a social constructivist perspective and contrasts the social-constructivist perspective with the behaviorist perspective that more closely matches mandated reading programs.

Social Constructivist Theory of Language Development

One of the basic tenets of social-constructivist language theory is that language should serve the communicative needs of individuals. Social constructivists contend that language development and literacy acquisition cannot be understood outside of the social-cultural context of the learners. Children learn language from using language in their natural environments:

> Children learn to talk like the people they see themselves as being. They learn to talk the way their friends talk. They learn the vocabulary and grammar of the language spoken around them, its idioms and jargon, its distinctive patterns of

> intonation and gesture, and its complex rules of eye contact, body posture, and interruptions. (Smith, 1996, p. 20)

Smith contends that reading and writing are integral parts of all academic activity and should not just be subjects taught. Reading and writing should be viewed as essential elements allowing students the avenues to engage in learning.

Language learning is a tool used for making meaning. Literacy "is not separate parts (words, sounds, sentences) but a supersystem of social practices" (Edelsky, 1993, p. 548). Therefore, the best way to learn language and the system of language is through using language with others, and through sharing and learning from and with others about how language works. Social constructivist theory departs from the functionalist paradigm that supports skill instruction in its *purpose* for teaching literacy: language skills are taught because they are needed for *communication*. In the social constructivist paradigm, teachers know their students as learners: they use individual students' proficiencies and miscues to guide instruction, and they teach the skills needed in the context of reading meaningful, authentic texts.

Understanding the social nature of learning is relevant in understanding the social constructivist understanding of how literacy develops in children. Both Dyson (1993) and Heath (1983/1989) are ethnographic researchers whose work provides important insight into the social needs of literacy development. Dyson (1993) helps us understand how important it is for children to be part of a social community in order to be successful learners. In her study, she finds that children are members of complex sociocultural worlds that affect how they learn. Dyson contends that the social environment in classrooms must allow expression and create an environment that challenges and nurtures

young learners. Students need to be in communities that draw on home cultures and make connections in the official culture of school.

When students' home cultures are unlike their school cultures, barriers exist that prevent academic success (Heath, 1983/1989). Literacy learning requires that connections be made between the home culture and the school culture. Heath studied the language patterns within culturally different groups, and found that the

> patterns of language use in any community are in accord with and mutually reinforce other cultural patterns, such as space and time orderings, [and] problem-solving techniques.... The patterns of interactions between oral and written uses of language are varied and complex, and the traditional oral-literate dichotomy does not capture the ways other cultural patterns in each community affect the uses of oral and written language. (p. 344)

The implications of Heath's findings are critical in reading instruction. Curriculum frameworks must include multiple language patterns; they must bridge home and school cultures, and they must not restrict language use within any single format.

Following the social constructivist tradition, book talks and literature discussions are major tools in reading instruction (DiPardo & Freedman, 1988; Eeds & Wells, 1989; Kakas, 1991; Newkirk & McClure, 1992; Nystrand & Gamoran, 1991). Reading, writing and speaking are integral parts of instruction, with "literacy" emerging as an integrated process that includes reading, writing and discussion in well defined and structured reading and writing workshops (Graves, 1983).

Graves believes strongly that children should start literacy learning with what they know, and extend their knowledge through multiple experiences that are enhanced when they are collaborative. Reading and writing that follow the social constructivist framework promotes children reading and writing together, sharing their work, and helping each other throughout the process. This instructional approach is supported by

Vygotsky's (1978) seminal work and the zone of proximal development (ZPD) for children start learning at their developmental level, and the teacher, other students, as well as independent reading experiences act as forces to pull students through their zone to the next level.

Educators grounded in social constructivist theory understand that there are many forces at work in a child's mind while learning to read and write, that reading and writing are part of a child's overall language development, and that practices in meaningful expression are the most effective ways to advance a child's language. In summary, these educators believe that "reading and writing are learned best by actually engaging in reading and writing (not through reading and writing activities), that literacy instruction should be rich in content, and that children's interests and purposes are paramount in learning to read and write" (Strickland & Morrow, 2000, p. 6). As a result, comprehension instruction focuses on real uses of reading and on authentic children's literature. Comprehension strategies are taught in the context of meaningful reading activities from the beginning stages of reading. This is in direct contrast to a skills approach where texts are designed to reflect phonics patterns and comprehension skills are taught in isolation and are secondary to word level skills in beginning reading instruction.

Skills Approach

The principles of the social constructivist theory directly contrast functionalist teaching methods, which are based on the following tenets:

- running all text through the skill mill
- subjecting all texts to skill instruction (worksheet activities)
- subjecting all texts to skill check-ups (comprehension questions)

- turning every opportunity to *read* into an assignment to engage in a reading experience. (Edelsky, 1990, p. 9)

As noted in Chapter 1, the functionalist methodology subscribes to sequential skill development of alphabetics that is considered the groundwork for reading. From this perspective, if a student is not able to rapidly retrieve letter/sound correspondence; the reader is not able to comprehend. Comprehension is the ultimate goal of reading, a skills-based approach delays formal comprehension instruction until students have systematic introduction to phonics. For some reading researchers and teachers, this delay in comprehension instruction and the heavy emphasis on the alphabetic principles is unwarranted, and even incorrect. "Comprehension instruction researchers believe that comprehension should be the primary goal of elementary reading instruction – that reading is about understanding, not just recognizing words" (Pressley et al., 2002, p. 76).

The "reading wars" that have been raging for over 100 years have created a polarized system which has juxtaposed meaning focused instruction and skill based instruction (Strickland & Morrow, 2000). "Current patterns suggest there may be a 'knee-jerk reaction' in which instruction becomes overly focused on phonemic awareness and phonics activities as *the* long-missing solution" (p. 7). However, it should be noted that the standards for reading educators set forth by the IRA include teaching word identification and explicit teaching of syntactic, semantic, and grapho-phonemic relationships. Learning to read, including instruction in word identification and cueing systems as *part of the process* is not enough for skills-based educators who focus instruction primarily on sound/system patterns. The disagreement in teaching reading centers around this specific competency:

> It is the amount of emphasis given to each of these three sources of information and the point in the sequence of beginning reading instruction at which they are emphasized, that are a concern of still other reading educators…it is important to remember that the disagreements are not about the usefulness of any one of them. Rather, the disagreements center on when they should be emphasized in a program of beginning reading instruction and at what point in the process of identifying words students should be encouraged to focus on one or more than one of these sources of information. (Armbruster & Osborn, 2002, p.34-35)

Whereas some reading professionals teach the cueing system in the context of reading, using a host of strategies such as, but not limited to, semantic context cues, prior knowledge and experience with texts, as well as phonics, skill-based educators want more. Armbruster and Osborn ask teachers to note the heavy emphasis the NRP (2000) places on the importance of the graphophonemic cueing system, and to plan instruction to "focus on the acquisition of graphophonemic knowledge" (p. 37).

There is also disagreement in the mandates concerning phonics instruction. Competency 6.2 of the IRA Standards for Reading Professionals (2003) sets forth the expectation that reading professionals will "use phonics to teach students to use their knowledge of letter/sound correspondence to identify sounds in the construction of meaning." Skills-based educators prefer to reword this standard and to decontextualize phonics instruction; they do not teach phonics "in the construction of meaning" but "teach students to use phonics, which is the knowledge of letter and sound correspondence, to identify words so as to construct meaning" (Armbruster, B. and Osborn, J., 2002, p. 39). This translates to phonics instruction *prior to* reading for the sake of "rapid retrieval" during reading that the functionalist methodology considers necessary for comprehension.

In the past, these differences in professional opinions regarding reading methodology were sorted out and decisions were made either at the district level or they

were school-based decisions. However, recent legislation has intervened and legislators are mandating phonics instruction at state levels:

> Both the substance and language of bills introduced after 1994 indicate an increased tendency on the part of state legislators to remove discretion over methodology of reading instruction from state departments of education, local school boards, and individual school and classroom teachers--in short, to prescribe instructional methodology in reading through state statutes. (Paterson, F., 2002, p. 163-164)

Mandating reading instruction minimizes the vast knowledge of reading professionals; it removes all teacher decision-making in regard to individual student instructional needs. It has "moved the 'reading wars' into the political arena" (Paterson, p. 184).

Within the discussion of teaching phonics, foremost attention has been given to *explicit* and *systematic* instruction. According to Cambourne (2002),

> explicit teaching refers to the practice of deliberately demonstrating and bringing to learners' conscious awareness of those covert and invisible processes, understandings, knowledge, and skills over which they need to control if they are to become effective readers.... I define systematic instruction as that which is based on proactive rational planning. (p. 219, 220)

Cambourne's research documented that effective teachers were at times explicit and at other times implicit in their teaching. In effective classrooms, teachers were explicit in their personal responses to and preferences for literature and other texts, in their reasons for teaching activities and literacy events, and the processes that enable successful reading. Allington and Johnston (2002) found the same results in their study of exemplary teachers. Systematic instruction was present in effective classrooms. Effective systematic instruction includes rational planning, documenting, and assessing teaching activities in advance of delivering lessons that were supported by confident and coherent rationales that facilitated student learning. However, Cambourne also cautions his readers:

> The new slogan-Explicit and Systematic Teaching of Reading-is potentially a dangerous one for teachers to implement. This is not because there is anything wrong with being explicit and systematic. On the contrary, it is when explicit and systematic teaching is also mindless and decontextualized that it becomes dangerous. (p. 223)

Mindless teaching and learning develop "as a consequence of mindless repetition and practice. Automaticity results in responses and meanings that tend to be nonconscious, invariant, and fixed, regardless of context" (p. 221). It is what results from scripted teaching and learning where teachers do not base instruction on their knowledge of students' need, instead they follow a sequence defined by publishers of programs designed to deliver instruction in a set, prescribed manner.

Mandating sequential phonics delivery has increased in legislation and forced change in classroom instruction. Sequential, then, supercedes systematic and explicit in exerting control over the curriculum. Systematic and explicit teaching is demonstrated in a variety of methodological practices, including those based on social constructivist theory. Sequential, however, redefines systematic, requiring the system to be defined by the sequence:

> The use of the term sequential would appear to preclude whole language approaches that teach children to sound out words as needed; that is, when they encounter words in text or when the teacher determines that phonetic cue strategy is appropriate for particular words encountered in text. (Patterson, 2002, p. 163)

Justification of this mandated legislation comes from educators who believe that children should learn the code system before they learn to read:

> Because the importance of understanding the alphabetic principle is so fundamental to reading an alphabetic language, a number of program developers have worked on programs designed to teach phonics. Some advocates of phonics instruction propose elaborate schemes for the teaching of hundreds of letter-sound relationships. Their claim is that children should learn all of these relationships before beginning to read words and stories. (Armbruster & Osborne, 2002, p. 44)

Educators agree that phonics instruction is an important component of reading instruction, however, the degree to which phonics instruction benefits readers or the way in which it should be taught fosters disagreement. Research has supported phonics instruction, but what has not been established by research, even though it is being mandated in schools across the United States, are any benefits in teaching sequential, systematic phonics:

> Developing effective and efficient decoding proficiencies is important; that's not the issue. It is how to best develop those proficiencies that is at the root of the debate. The National Reading Panel… said that phonics instruction should be systematic and occur in kindergarten and first grade, and that intensive phonics does not work better than less intensive approaches. It did not mention, much less recommend, the use of decodable texts. The panel report said nothing about the content, structure, or delivery of a research-based phonics curriculum. (Allington, 2002, p.158)

This research focuses on the content, structure and delivery of a research-based phonics program. The standards-based political movement is current, rendering little evidence of the affects of mandated policy on the classroom. This study enters the classrooms and schools and describes the classrooms and the teachers most affected by mandated policy.

Recent Research

Change in education is widely researched. Change often implies positive action, and researchers often refer it to as reform. However, when change is imposed, it cannot be assumed to be positive. The current trend to control education through high-stakes testing cannot assume the title of reform, instead it should be called what it is, imposed curriculum.

Research conducted by Brown (1993) investigates the differences placed on state mandated testing by two groups: politicians and educators. His research relied on

interviews conducted with principals and teachers in three states that have varying experience with statewide testing: Tennessee, Illinois, and New York. Brown contends that test results have been used as a political tool to alter instruction and manipulate control away from local educators which negative affects educators. Brown's research reveals a number of important findings. The teachers in his study develop a mistrust of legislators and state departments of education. Too much emphasis is placed on test results in setting educational policy because "the results of state tests are limited sources of information in evaluating student achievement" (p. 19). Though the participants of Brown's research report they are not "aware of the purposes for establishing mandated testing," they do believe that "the results are used primarily for comparing school systems" (p. 19). Brown concludes that educators develop a perception of powerlessness concerning these issues that intimately affects classrooms. He calls for increased involvement from professional educators when setting educational policy.

A second study conducted by Williamson and Churchill (1996) seeks to discover the affects of imposed reform efforts in South Australia and Tasmania. The multi-site, multi-method project includes both interview and survey data, with participation determined by random selection of schools. Within the schools, participants were selected by their willingness to participate in the project. Their findings do not indicate positive affects of imposed change; rather they identify a number of negative affects.

Teachers in Williamson and Churchill's study experience a shift away from focusing on their students to a focus on paperwork. Teachers reduce the time they spend planning in order to complete necessary paperwork, and they report that they have less time to actually teach. The teachers do not always completely understand their new

expectations before they are required to implement them in the classrooms and they feel they are left to decipher the new mandates on their own with no support from the people who put the mandates in place. Teachers suffer a loss of confidence in teaching when they are asked to implement policies they do not fully understand and are concerned about simultaneous implementation of multiple initiatives. The teachers report that the timelines to implement change are unrealistic. They need more time. The most important finding in Williamson and Churchill's research directly addresses externally imposed reform. The teachers report that changes mandated by externally imposed central administration and government are the most problematic. Williamson and Churchill present this environment as "an example of deskilling" (p. 4).

This research seeks to personalize these current issues in a specific education policy setting. Much has been written about the disagreement in reading instruction, there is a wide body of research regarding educational reform, and the politicization of educational policy is of national interest. What has not been described is the affect of mandated policy change on classrooms. What classroom environments result when teachers are forced to teach a program they do not choose? What does instruction really look like? What happens to the professional self when teaching in these settings?

CHAPTER 3
THE STUDY

> The NRP believes that the nonexperimental literature is a rich source for future research programs. Teacher education [and professional development] research involves particularly complex problems. Doing the research is expensive and time consuming. Therefore, one particular contribution of the nonexperimental research literature may be to provide a source of problems to be studied under more controlled conditions. (NRP, 5:15)

Phenomenological Case Study

This study begins with the assumption that there are external forces acting upon the decision-making process a teacher engages in concerning reading curriculum. These forces are the political climate of the school and imposed school reform efforts. A second main assumption is that the teacher's efforts to act on the demands from these sources affect the teacher's understanding of literacy development and her/his concept of teaching. The third assumption is that the complex relationship between imposed reform and the teacher's understanding of literacy development impact reading experiences for students.

This research enters the teacher's environment, recognizing that these forces are interactive and act on a continuum that ranges from harmony to direct opposition of each other. A phenomenological case study allows this researcher to understand the ways a teacher makes sense of these forces while teaching reading.

A phenomenological case study requires entering the teachers' environment to describe "the meaning of the lived experiences for several individuals about a concept or the phenomenon" (Creswell, 1998, p. 51). More specifically, by entering the teachers'

environment, the classroom, observations reveal the teachers' and students' experience with the phenomena being studied. This study is complicated by the presence of these two groups of participants, the students and the teachers; understanding the phenomena requires examining the experiences of both groups. Therefore, with four teachers participating, this phenomenological case study is also a collective case study. A collective case study of the four teachers allows the researcher to jointly inquire into a phenomenon from a number of individual cases that results in a deep understanding of the meaning for those involved (Creswell, 1998). Collective case studies require cross case analyses that reveal how the different individuals experience the phenomena as well as patterns that emerge across cases.

This study focuses on the process of teaching to provide insight, discovery and interpretation for educators. The study will describe what occurred over a five month period in relation to the teachers' efforts to confront a critical problem in many of today's classrooms: *How do teachers react to the demands imposed from outside their classrooms on their reading instruction?*

According to Merriam (1988), the essential properties of a qualitative case study include four characteristics: particularistic, descriptive, heuristic, and inductive. The cases studied here are particularistic in that they focus on a particular situation: how teachers perceive curricular demands and the students' needs in reading instruction. They are descriptive in nature in that they yield a thick description of reading instruction as it is encountered in the classroom. The thickness of the description will be enhanced by the fact that this research took place over a five-month period and is a holistic study. It is heuristic in that it provides information to practitioners regarding reading instruction

in a politically charged environment. The inductive nature of this study is noted in its quest to understand the complex interaction of forces that influence teachers' decisions.

Researcher's Perspective

Kirk and Miller (1986) state "Qualitative research is a particular tradition in social science that fundamentally depends on watching people in their own territory and interacting with them in their own language, on their own terms" (p. 9). For me, this is particularly true, for I taught in the same system as the teachers I am studying. Objectivity, therefore, in this research, needs to be clearly defined. In accord with Kirk and Miller, I believe that "the way we perceive and understand [the] world is largely up to us, but the world does not tolerate all understandings of it equally" (p. 11). The intolerance of all understandings is a critical point in performing our jobs as both educators and researchers.

It is my belief that all teachers should be action researchers (Hubbard and Power, 1993), that every decision made in the classroom is based on the teacher's theoretical and ideological framework, and that our students should be our informants who guide us in establishing routines and defining goals. When people outside of our classrooms set our routines and goals for us, teaching becomes problematic. No longer are the needs of our students our primary concern, rather, we answer to a self-imposed higher authority. When tests become the driving force in our teaching, we compromise our students.

It is important to note that my experience as a classroom teacher in this school district includes teaching a mandated reading program. I did not teach at Shoals Elementary School, but I did teach in a sister school that mandates Success For All and therefore I have personal experience in many of the issues raised in this study. My

history as a teacher in the same district provides a common bond between the teachers and me that contributes to this study in many ways.

Objectivity in qualitative research is critically important. According to Kirk and Miller (1986), objectivity is "a commitment to integrating new findings into the cumulative body of collective knowledge and confronting ideas with data as well as an argument" (p. 79). Among educational researchers, there is a body of research that informs our field concerning school reform. There also is another body of research that informs our field regarding reading instruction. Still another body of research informs our field regarding teacher beliefs. However, researchers, not teachers, predominantly conduct this research. From this cumulative body of knowledge, I confront the idea that imposing or mandating curriculum on teachers has known effects, but I argue that the real effects have not been examined from an insider's perspective. As a teacher/researcher who struggles with the same issues that the teachers in the study struggle with, under the same political pressure from the state and district level, this research presents an insider, teacher's perspective more closely than most research.

Objectivity, therefore, for me, lies in the ability to report how the teachers in this study "perceive and understand the world." My own struggle with the phenomenon of teaching an imposed curriculum gives this research personal meaning. It allows me to be an empathetic listener and observer and it gives me a special lens to see layers of meaning while interpreting the data.

In order to fully appreciate this project, it is important to understand what was invested before data collection, and to understand the relationships that developed between the faculty at Shoals Elementary School and me. In the fall semester of the

2001-2002 school year, I started an assignment as part of an instructional team of university site-based instructors in collaboration with Shoals, a rural school located in one of the outlying communities in the county where I had lived for the past 25 years and had worked for the school district in some capacity for 17 years. My assignment in the collaborative effort was to teach language arts methods and to jointly supervise roughly 30 university students who were placed at the school for their preservice teaching assignments. Going into the assignment, I had to make a professional decision as to how I wanted to present myself. I know that schools are unique communities, but I also know the general attitude often held by local teachers in this community toward "university projects." So often in our district the university comes in with a "great new idea" or a "program" which undoubtedly translates to meetings (for which teachers usually do not get reimbursed, and if they do it is at a flat rate of $10 per hour), preparation in addition to what teachers already do, observations by "administrative types" and evaluation of the teachers' personal and professional selves. Knowing this, I communicated to the faculty that I was a teacher on leave trying to finish my PhD so that I could give "us" voice, a teacher who worked in their system, knew their community and had fought their battles. I promised the teachers that I would listen to their concerns about language arts and reading instruction, watch their methods, and try to help our university students understand reading within the context of their school.

For the first half of the school year I talked very little about my own research agenda. In fact, it was not until halfway through the semester that I was able to begin to identify what my project might be, I only knew that I wanted to examine literacy development, and that I was most interested in writing instruction at the fourth grade

level. I conducted observations in classrooms based on the needs of my preservice teachers and I carried on conversations mainly initiated by the teachers based on their interests. I encouraged teachers to share their university students' struggles, especially in language arts instruction, and to let me know how I could be of service to them. I shared my feelings of loss transitioning out of the classroom which prompted one teacher who had two of my university students to offer me the opportunity to assist my students in teaching writing to a small group of fourth graders.

I had hoped to research fourth grade writing, but soon after beginning my semester at Shoals, I realized that I had access to no classrooms engaging in writing workshops. In fact, the reading instruction in the classrooms that allowed me access was most often scripted skill instruction. Based on my interactions with the teachers, it became clear that the principal mandated their reading instruction, and that the teachers did not necessarily agree that the students were benefiting from the program. This conflict gave rise to my research question: how do the teachers meet the demands imposed on their curriculum from forces outside their classroom? I invited the fourth grade teachers to participate hoping that I could concentrate on fourth grade, but as it turned out, only two fourth grade teachers agreed to be in the project. One of the two teachers expressed limitations on her participation: I could collect data from her classroom, and engage in informal interviews and conversations that could be shared, but that was all. She would grant no formal interviews. For her, the issue was time. She flatly refused to schedule time for a formal interview, but she would share whatever time she had at the school in interactions and chatting as long as it did not take away from her own planning or teaching. I accepted her offer. Another fourth grade teacher also volunteered to participate, but the

remaining fourth grade teachers refused. I then turned to the third grade teachers. I invited the two teachers with whom I was most comfortable and with whom I had developed a friendly relationship. They knew my interest was mainly fourth grade, but they immediately accepted my invitation, and were very happy to share their thoughts and their time.

All the participants who became part of my research are teachers with whom I had built a trusting relationship. I had interacted as a member of their school community from August through December before they committed themselves to participate in the project. In three cases, I had university students assigned to their classrooms in preservice placements during the fall semester. In the fourth case, the classroom the school assigned our partnership was adjoining his, and since the room was divided by a temporary partition, he could hear all of my instruction and conversation with my university students.

My purpose in planning this design was to go beyond ordinary research efforts to preserve the teachers' voices. As a teacher in the same system, and a member of the school community via my university assignment, I was both an insider and an outsider at Shoals. My common teaching experiences were often topics of conversation, for we compared instructional methods, common issues in education, and engaged in "teacher talk" in the classrooms and the teachers' lounge. This brought me close to the teachers. On the other hand, I was not in the classroom at their school, I was a researcher, one who could only try to understand their position but with no power to help or interfere. This allowed the faculty to share their history and their perspective that helped me understand their position regarding reading instruction.

The insider/outsider role that I carried with me throughout this project added substantially to the depth of the teachers' perspectives. Teachers are teachers and researchers are researchers. Very rarely can anyone claim both titles with validity in the eyes of an elementary classroom teacher. Furthermore, teachers talk to other teachers in a different way than they talk to researchers or administrators. My purpose was to record *their* conceptual understanding of literacy, to communicate *their* interpretation of mandated reform, and to describe the classrooms that *students experience* as a result of their teachers' understanding of reading instruction that actualizes itself at the elementary school site. The best intentions of legislatures and policy makers to force reform do not matter. What matters is how the actions of policy makers are translated to and by the teachers. The only way to really hear this translation and to see the effect of attempts to reform reading instruction is to listen to the teachers and to view life in their classrooms.

Context of the Study

The School

This study takes place at Shoals Elementary,[1] a rural school in North Central Florida. The school reported a relatively stable student body (96% stability) and a free and reduced lunch percentage of students that was just over the state average (55.4% as compared to the State average of 52.6%) (Florida Department of Education, 2003a). The state grading system had created the impression that the students' performance at the school had stagnated. Pressure to improve the lowest quartile of student scores led the administration to make decisions to change the reading program the school had implemented for the past several years. According to the accountability statistics (Florida

[1] pseudonyms are used for the school, the teachers, and the students

Department of Education, 2003a), the school was not serving its lowest quartile of students well enough. Progress for the lowest level readers on the Florida Comprehensive Assessment Test (FCAT) is part of the school grading formula, and the school had fallen below the state's expected gains in this subgroup. According to the state grading system, unless students made greater gains than what Shoals had been able to achieve to date, they would remain a C school. Average schools, or C schools, did not qualify for extra funding or bonuses, and therefore, were problematic for school-based administrators. Lack of progress on the reading test for the group of students in the lowest quartile led to the implementation of a number of pilot reading programs in the classrooms. This, in turn, led to an administrative decision for the 2001-2002 school year that required direct instruction in almost every reading classroom in the school. The participants in this project all were required to use *Reading Mastery* (SRA-McGraw-Hill, 1995).

The Classrooms

This study occurred in four classrooms in a one-story elementary school. Entering the room from the hall door puts a visitor directly into the action in Mrs. Phillips' classroom. The desks are arranged in a large horseshoe, and the middle of the horseshoe has 6 desks grouped together, facing each other.

The north wall serves as the front of the classroom where the green chalkboard provides space for writing and the overhead screen is secured so that it can be pulled down over the board when necessary. The east wall displays student work; projects completed in social studies and math class. The southeast section of the classroom is set up as an open space reserved for math instruction. There is a white dry erase board secured to the wall that is used for math meetings, and room for the students to sit on the

floor to attend to instruction. The west wall is collapsible and left partially open at both ends. Along this wall is a table with reading books and supplies, and next to that is a desk for one student. Directly between the two classrooms on the south wall are two student restrooms.

On the other side of Mrs. Phillips' wall, Mrs. Zeigler's students' desks are grouped in sets of four scattered around the room. Mrs. Zeigler also uses the north wall as the front of the classroom. Mrs. Zeigler has a number of posters on the chalkboard, and like Mrs. Phillips, the overhead screen is secured so that it can be pulled down over the chalkboard. Mrs. Zeigler has a small round table along the south wall of the classroom, and in the southwest corner of the room there is a small couch and reading library area for the students. There is a low bookcase in the reading area full of children's literature. Large windows looking out onto a classroom terrace and an exterior door are on the east wall. The northeast corner of the classroom is the teacher's workspace. Here Mrs. Zeigler has a computer station on a large teacher's desk, with file cabinets and piles of teacher resources and student papers.

The school was built during the "open classroom" era. The main entrance of the building that guides visitors to the office is the door that accesses the third grade wing. To walk from Mrs. Phillips and Mrs. Zeigler's room to the side of the building that houses the fourth grade classrooms, you have to cross over to the other side of the building. The administrative offices and the media center divide the two sections. Constructed with waist high bookcases as walls, the media center is open and welcoming giving the school building a kid-friendly atmosphere. Every time I pass the media center I see both children and adults at work.

Mrs. Jones and Mr. Wright are two of seven fourth grade teachers. Both have been asked by the administration to teach *Reading Mastery* this school year. Mr. Wright's reading class is a small group of eleven fourth graders who are working below grade level in *Reading Mastery III*. Mrs. Jones has a group of twenty on-level fourth graders and is the only teacher who participated in this study who taught *Reading Mastery IV* which is the fourth level in the series. The three other teachers all taught *Reading Mastery III*.

Mr. Wright's classroom can be entered from the main hall, and the room is set up so that you enter the front of the room, which is the east wall. There is a teacher supply table in front of the chalkboard, and the overhead screen is raised and lowered to allow more chalkboard space when needed. To the left of the chalkboard is a small bulletin board with four large letters placed diagonally to spell out TEAM. The daily schedule is written on the far right side of the chalkboard.

Mr. Wright's classroom has two and a half permanent walls, the east, or front wall, the north wall, and one half of the south wall. The north wall has a small a teacher's supply cabinet, and two student restrooms. A large colorful chart that is used to record the student scores for the Accelerated Reader Program (Renaissance Learning) is attached to the doors to the supply closet. Most of this closet is reserved for supplies, however the bottom shelf has a stack of about twelve books that are leveled for the Accelerated Reader Program. When time allows, Mr. Wright gives the students permission to read these books.

The south wall extends halfway into the classroom, and at the point that the permanent wall ends, a space is left permanently open that acts as access to the computer

lab. On the other side of that opening Mr. Wright has placed large metal filing cabinets and a metal storage cabinet that serves as a container for the students' jackets and backpacks. Another permanent wall then serves as a bulletin board displaying commercial FCAT posters that hang over a small table that holds the Accelerated Reader notebook where students list the books read and their AR test scores for each book. Two pencil sharpeners, and a stapler that the students use as needed are also on the table.

The west wall, or the back wall of the classroom, is a temporary wall. Along this wall Mr. Wright has a large teacher-made poster titled: "AcceleRATE your Reading" and several cutout cars that identify the names of the high-scoring students as identified in the school "Point Clubs." Under this poster is a bookcase displaying three shelves of books. There is space to read, three bean bags chairs, a small round table that seats four, and another metal supply closet.

The student desks are paired so that they form four rows and three columns, or twelve sets of desks. Two pairs of desks have been shifted to allow an additional desk, making a set of three rather than two. All the desks face the main teaching area, chalkboard, and overhead screen on the east wall.

Mrs. Jones' classroom cannot be accessed from the hallway, instead you have to walk through two other fourth grade classrooms to get to the third where Mrs. Jones teaches. The main entrance to Mrs. Jones's room is through a temporary wall, which is on the east side of her classroom. Along the wall are several tables that hold science projects, math centers and commercial FCAT posters.

The front of the classroom is the south wall, and has a chalkboard, an overhead screen, and a small bulletin board. On the bulletin board is a monthly calendar and

pockets with each student's name as well as a chart that list the various classroom jobs. The students use this bulletin board to check in to school each morning. The board also serves as a reminder for students' to execute the job they have been assigned in the classroom for that week.

The west wall is a permanent wall that has an exterior door, however the door must be kept locked and does not provide access into the classroom during the day because of fire and safety regulations. The class exits that door, but the interior door is the main entrance into the classroom. Also along this wall is the teacher's desk, a bookcase that houses reading books and other supplies including board games the student play in the mornings and a small cassette player, a supply closet, a sink and a restroom for the students.

The back wall of the classroom is a temporary wall. In front of this wall are two tables, one that is a permanent student math center and the other is a rectangular table that is used for teacher and students to work together in partners or small groups.

The student desks in Mrs. Jones's classroom are set in groups of four pushed together so that the students face each other in small groups. There are six sets of these groups of four, placed roughly in two rows of three and angled so that the students can easily turn and see the front of the classroom.

Reading Mastery

This research is not an investigation of the *Reading Mastery* program, rather, it is an investigation into the effect on the teachers who are required to teach a specific reading program, in this case the program is *Reading Mastery*. Therefore the main components and structure of the *Reading Mastery* program are presented in order to

provide a clear description of the context within which the teacher participants of this study were operating.

Reading Mastery (Engelmann and Hanner, 1995b) is part of a direct instruction series of curricula published by Science Research Associates (SRA), which is a division of McGraw-Hill Publishers. The series includes *Reading Mastery I--VI* programs. The philosophy guiding the program is based on two basic tenets: "1) If the student hasn't learned, the delivery system hasn't taught; and 2) Instruction should be based on *facts* about the learner" (Engelmann and Hanner, 1995b, p.1). The *facts* referred to in the quote are the students' reading level as measured by standardized tests that determine the students' reading proficiency, successful completion of the students' prior reading level of any reading program, and a placement test provided by the program. Students are placed at their appropriate reading level as "measured by standardized achievement tests" (Engelmann and Hanner, 1995b, p.3) and are homogeneously grouped according to performance. The program recommends small group instruction based on the notion that it is easier to give feedback to individuals in a small group and because it is easier to adjust the presentation rate as some groups will move faster than others. However, the program contends that it is "possible to present *Reading Mastery III [and IV]* to an entire class [if the class is] homogeneous with every student being a capable reader" (Engelmann and Hanner, 1995b, p.3).

The program is an "instructivist approach" (Kozloff et. al, 1999) that follows the behaviorist perspective and espouses the creed that "the causes of failure can be found in the way material was presented to the learner" and that "the causes of learning are adequate teaching presentations and adequate practice" (Engelmann and Hanner, 1995b,

p.1). Therefore, presentations of the materials in the program are precise and controlled. The control is maintained in presentation through a scripted delivery approach. The materials control language and comprehension tasks:

> *Reading Mastery III [and IV]* controls important aspects of reading development that are appropriate for students who have beginning third-grade [and fourth-grade] skills--repetition of vocabulary, syntax or sentence structure, topics, concepts and applications. The program is able to exercise precise control over these components because it is not an anthology of stories written by different authors. All stories in *Reading Mastery III [and IV]* were written with precise specifications for vocabulary, sentence structure, and content. (Engelmann and Hanner, 1995b, p.2)

The instructional texts use a special orthography that reduces the number of letter-sound correspondences the children must learn and employs explicit phonic instruction for the first two levels, *Reading Mastery I* and *Reading Mastery II*. "*Reading Mastery* analyzes the language carefully to identify the most frequent, highly useful letter-sound correspondences" and restricts instruction to include "only forty letter-sound correspondences" that *Reading Mastery* identified (Grossen, 2002, p.6).

> *Reading Mastery* is based on the principle that
>
> To gain meaning from text (i.e. comprehension) is the purpose of reading, but gaining meaning is not possible unless a reader can translate the printed words into the language they represent (i.e. decode). Reading comprehension assumes decoding ability.... The research on the last few decades strongly indicates that a phonic approach during the initial reading acquisition (approximately the first year or two of reading instruction) is better than a meaning-emphasis approach. (Grossen, 2002, p. 2)

The decoding emphasis continues into levels three and four and a reading comprehension focus is added to the decoding focus at these higher levels. *Reading Mastery III* is the first level that focuses on reading comprehension as the main purpose for reading (Grossen, 2002) and "each lesson in *Reading Mastery III* has two distinct objectives: one

is decoding, the other is comprehension" (Engelmann and Hanner, 1995b, p. 6). This program design continues into *Reading Mastery IV*.

Lessons in *Reading Mastery III* and *IV* are primarily made up by three main components. Each of the three components (*teacher-directed lessons*, *independent work – reading*, and *workchecks*) is described in the "Teacher's Guide" provided as part of the program's reading materials. Both level three and level four texts contain "140 scripted lessons that provide specific teacher instruction for presenting every activity in the program" (Engelmann and Hanner, 1995b, p. 4).

Teacher directed lessons

The "teacher-directed lessons" begin each lesson and require approximately thirty to thirty-five minutes. "Teacher directed lessons" includes word-attack presentation, comprehension passage, main-story reading, and paired reading (level four only) events.

The **word attack** presentation introduces and decodes the vocabulary needed for the particular lesson or for future lessons. Work attack starts with either new vocabulary or with a decoding lesson. For lessons that start with new vocabulary that is deemed more difficult, the teacher presents the words, the students repeat the words, and then the students decode each word by spelling it aloud. If a new sound combination is introduced, the teacher identifies it, and the students read words that contain the sound combination. For example, lesson 18 in *Reading Mastery IV* (Engelmann and Hanner, 1995a, p. 122) presents two decoding exercises. The script printed below follows the presentation book. For those readers unfamiliar with the program design, I have added notes to the script (in italics) to indicate what the program expects the teacher to do after each direction:

T: Everybody, find lesson 18, part A in your textbook. *The teacher pauses while students find part A.*

T: Touch column 1. *The teacher checks to make sure all the students are touching column 1.*

T: The letters e-a are in all those words. But be careful because e-a makes different sounds in the words. Touch under the first word. *The teacher checks to make sure all the students are touching under the first word.*

T: What word? [Signal] *the teacher signals by making some distinct sound that cues the students to respond in unison. The students read the word,* creaks, *and the teacher listens to make sure they read it correctly. If so, the teacher moves on to the next word. If not, the teacher says, something like, "No, that word is* creaks, *say the word."*

T: Next word. What word? *The students read the word,* sweat, *and the teacher listens to make sure they read it correctly.*

The teacher continues this through the following three words in the column: squeals, weather, and squeaks. Then, the teacher moves to column 2:

T: Everybody, touch column 2. [Signal] The teacher checks to make sure all the students are touching under column 2.

T: The letters o-u are in all those words. But be careful because o-u makes different sounds in the words. Touch under the first word. The teacher checks to make sure all the students are touching under the first word.

T: What word? [Signal] The students read the word, enough, and the teacher listens to make sure they read it correctly.

T: Next word. What word? [Signal] The students read the word, sound, and the teacher listens to make sure they read it correctly.

Again, the teacher presents the remaining three words, cough, brought, and rough in the same fashion. Then the teacher moves on to three columns of words that are not part of the decoding emphasis for this lesson, and the students read through the words together.

The final section of the word attack is an introduction of the vocabulary words. The number of words presented range from three to seven in each lesson.

> Reading Mastery uses a variety of strategies to teach vocabulary. Some words are taught directly by simply providing a synonym.... Other vocabulary words receive more intensive practice requiring students to use the words to label pictures. Many difficult or important academic concepts are taught with examples and nonexamples. (Grossen, 2002)

Overall, the *Reading Mastery* program's "decoding emphasis involves a cycle that introduces new decoding words and word families, presents these words in different story contexts, and provides practice in meeting oral reading rate-accuracy criteria" (Engelmann and Hanner, 1995b, p. 7). Furthermore, the vocabulary practice is cumulative, with words reappearing on the word attack list after they have been initially introduced. They appear at least ten times in the context of the reading passages (Engelmann and Hanner, 1995b).

Main-story reading and the **comprehension passage** are simultaneous presentations after the word attack is completed. The main-story reading includes students reading aloud while attending to decoding, fluency, and accuracy at the same time as they complete comprehension tasks directed by the teacher. As the students read through the passage, the teacher calls on as many students as possible to read a sentence or two of the passage. Students read aloud one at a time, and the number of students who read each day is dependent on the length of the passage. During this reading, the teacher immediately corrects any errors in decoding, and also asks a number of comprehension questions. The comprehension tasks include literal or recall questions, character development inference questions, and questions that require the students to draw conclusions based on the information in the test, or why and how questions.

The **paired reading practice** is an exercise that occurs only in *Reading Mastery IV* and is an opportunity for students to reread a portion of the main-story aloud to a partner:

> The purpose of paired reading is to provide students with an opportunity to read a relatively long passage without interruption. Although students receive oral-reading practice during the main-story reading, they usually read only two or three sentences at a time, and their reading may be interrupted with comprehension activities. The paired-reading practice takes only several minutes for each lesson and makes a marked difference in the fluency performance of students. (Engelmann and Hanner, 1995b, p. 7)

This activity is only a part of the lessons where students have reading passages. For this exercise, the students are assigned permanent partners, partner A and partner B, and they alternate between being A and being B. It is teacher-directed but not scripted, and it is always assigned after the students complete the comprehension tasks, and before they move on to their written work. An example of the activity noted in the presentation book for Lesson 18 is below:

> **EXERCISE 7** Paired practice
>
> Direct the **B** members to read from M to R. **A** members then read from R to the end of the story. (Engelmann and Hanner, 1995a, p. 126)

For this particular story, M-R is one paragraph, and R to the end of the story is two shorter paragraphs.

Independent work--reading

The independent work – reading component requires thirty minutes and includes **workbook** and **skillbook** items. The goal of this component is for the student to work independently and record answers that reflect their comprehension on the oral reading work in the lesson. Teachers should monitor the students but should not offer too much support.

> **You shouldn't help a student more than once during a lesson. The more you help, the less information you have about what a student actually knows and the more the students will rely on you to help them. If you have already helped once and the student has another problem, you may say something like: "I think you may have another problem because you didn't read an item**

carefully. Read over all the items and see if you can find one that you may have misread." (Emphasis in original; Engelmann and Hanner, 1995b, p. 32)

The program also includes individual reading checks and recommends these rate-accuracy checks take place during the independent work – reading time of the lesson. The checks are recommended every fifth lesson, and require each student to read a passage from the previous lesson aloud while a checker times the reader and listens for errors. The student must read the marked passage in one minute or less. The results of the rate-accuracy checks are marked as either a "P" for pass, or "F" for failed, depending on the length of time it takes to read and the number of errors made. The scores are collected on a group summary sheet and are used to monitor continuous progress and identify problem areas in reading.

Monitoring of the teachers' rate of teaching and student progress occurred weekly at Shoals. To monitor the number of lessons that the teachers delivered the teachers filled out a form that was made available to the Curriculum Resource Teacher (CRT) on a weekly basis. Monitoring student progress consisted of the weekly rate and accuracy checks that the instructional aides performed. The results of these checks were kept in a notebook in the classrooms so that teachers could access the data.

Workchecks

The third component of the lessons is the *workchecks*. The reading workchecks require an additional ten minutes and are "most efficiently handled as a group activity" (p. 34). The primary goal of this component is for the students to check their workbook and skillbook responses while the teacher reads the questions and tells the students the correct answers. The students mark their books and the grades are recorded and used as another measure of progress.

The Participants

Since the State grading formula includes heavy emphasis on fourth grade reading scores, as noted earlier, I tried to focus this project on fourth grade teachers. However, the majority of the fourth grade teachers would not participate in the study because of the politically charged atmosphere at the school that will be discussed in later chapters. When I failed to obtain permission from the fourth grade teachers, I started searching third grade as they are the second grade level most affected by the reading test scores. Two teachers who had been asked to teach the *Reading Mastery* curriculum volunteered to be in the research. The participants include two fourth grade teachers (one white male, one black female) and two third grade teachers (white females).

Mrs. Zeigler, one of the third grade teachers in this study, has been teaching for fourteen years. She is a certified Special Education teacher who accepted her first regular education assignment the year this study was conducted. Mrs. Zeigler fits well in Shoal's rural school community, usually dressed in slacks and often wearing the school's staff polo shirt. She approaches her students with a sense of shared responsibility, much like a mother who will pack her child's lunch but requires the child to remember to bring the lunch to school. Her routines are well established; her students know what they are responsible for doing at any given moment they are in the classroom. Early in the school year Mrs. Zeigler worked on establishing routines with her students that began the very first thing in the morning. In just the second week of school, Mrs. Zeigler's students entered the classroom and began purposeful work, sharpening their pencils, turning in their homework, and completing the assignment recorded on the board.

Watching Mrs. Zeigler's interactions with her students, one gets the sense that she is actively teaching responsibility. Mrs. Zeigler continuously offers support for students, recording their assignments on the board, circulating among the students clarifying academic and procedural misunderstandings. She assigns jobs to her third graders, moving responsibility to them for routines such as passing out paper, taking the attendance to the office, and cleaning up the classroom at the close of the day. She waits patiently for her students as they prepare for their lessons. I have no record or recollection of Mrs. Zeigler ever raising her voice in her classroom for disciplinary reasons.

Mrs. Phillips has been teaching for eighteen years. Where Mrs. Zeigler can be described as a "working mom" in the way she interacts with her students, Mrs. Phillips is more a combination of mother/grandmother to her third grade students. Mrs. Phillips shows more emotion during her day; she smiles often, hugs her students, and has a personal way of interacting with them. Mrs. Phillips waits for all her students to be seated before she gives them instructions, and therefore students are able to interact socially before their academic day begins. Conversations flow around the classroom while students prepare for their day, and directions are given orally rather than being prerecorded on the board. Mrs. Phillips also redirects student behavior more often than Mrs. Zeigler. It is not uncommon to hear her approach an off-task child with calm statements like she did one morning when one of her more challenging students was preparing for the day. As Will took his turn at the pencil sharpener, I heard Mrs. Phillips say, "Please do not stick your pencil in the pencil sharpener that way. The eraser might jam it and make it not work." It is also not uncommon to hear Mrs. Phillips raise her

voice to get the class calmed down and more focused on instruction. There is a great amount of inflection in both instruction, conversation and for reasons of discipline when she talks to her students.

Mrs. Phillips is the only teacher who participated in this study who spoke favorably about programmatic instruction. Following a teacher's manual and working within a reading program that provides appropriate learning opportunities is favorable to Mrs. Phillips' view of teaching. That is not to say that she does not see strengths and/or weaknesses in the programs, but that she will approach the task with a positive attitude. When working with a program, Mrs. Phillips lets the program take the responsibility to include the necessary components for student learning. However, in addition to desiring a well-developed reading program, Mrs. Phillips also prefers the latitude within the program design to include project learning and creative activities to enrich the students' learning. This preference was noted when she started the year using manipulatives in math and requiring projects for the students to discover more about each other. It is also evident in the classroom décor, for the classroom and walls display illustrated math concepts and social studies activities that the students constructed to demonstrate their learning.

Mr. Wright is a fourth grade teacher who volunteered to be in the study. The youngest of the four teachers, Mr. Wright has taught only at Shoals Elementary School. In fact, he did his full time internship at the school and has been teaching there since he graduated from the university six years ago. Mr. Wright was very willing to be part of the research, as he stated that he is willing to do anything to help our profession. He believes that research can lead us to answers, and we need answers to help us meet the

needs of our students. Mr. Wright believes that "we do a disservice sometimes when we assume that all kids learn the same way" and he prefers to employ a variety of strategies in teaching to ensure that he reaches all his students.

Mr. Wright is active in his professional service to the school, serving on several committees, but he realizes that his service roles afford him only limited power in decision making in his classroom. Therefore, it is his strategy to go about his business of teaching, doing enough of what he is told to not attract negative attention to himself. Therefore, when visiting his classroom, you see evidence of all the programs the school administration supports. There is a high achievers board celebrating the top scorers for the Accelerated Readers program, there are posters hanging that list FCAT vocabulary words as well as commercial posters advertising the FCAT. On the other hand, there are also teacher-designed bulletin boards and labeled three-dimensional models hanging from the ceiling that remind the students of their own rectangular prisms and cylinders that they made during math class.

Mr. Wright's interaction with the students is well planned. He starts each day with a message projected on the overhead screen. It is always a colorful "Good Morning" and often is decorated with smiley faces or stars and includes a list of responsibilities that guides the students to turn in their homework, prepare their supplies and complete their morning math assignments. While the students settle in, Mr. Wright greets them with a pleasant, "Good Morning" as he takes attendance and engages in his own preparations for the day.

Every student in the room is under a strict behavior plan. The students have a list of rules:

1. Pay attention to the task at hand.
2. Adjust your talking to the situation.
3. Move in a safe way that does not disturb others.
4. Be respectful: treat all people politely and kindly.
5. Take pride in your school and yourself.

If the students break a rule, Mr. Wright calmly says, "Bobby, you have a number 2." That is their warning. If they continue to break the rule, Mr. Wright writes their name on the board. If the same behavior continues, the student is sent to time out. If the behavior persists, Mr. Wright makes a phone call to the student's home.

Mrs. Jones, another fourth grade teacher who volunteered to be in the study, has a very professional persona. A seasoned teacher, she is impeccably dressed, her hair is always neat, her clothes and shoes always match, and she gives a definite feeling that she perceives teaching as an honored profession. Mrs. Jones is the only black teacher who participated in this research. Mrs. Jones shows both kindness and sternness to her students, all with her voice and manner. Her language is very controlled and her vocabulary is extensive and expressive as she lays out learning and behavioral expectations for her students. She has achieved a real sense of community in her classroom. Her students are a group. They help each other both academically and procedurally, they communicate with each other, and they play together. Mrs. Jones is the only teacher in the study whose students complete their morning responsibilities and then go to centers or board games around the classroom until instructional time calls them back to their seats.

The students' ability to stay on task, get their work completed and therefore earn the time to socialize comes from Mrs. Jones's efforts to teach the students to care for each other. She spent a great amount of time nudging students to notice when each other

needed help. One morning she calmly asked Barry to take the chair down off Joe's desk because he was obviously not coming in early and would need time to gather himself when he did arrive; another time Mrs. Jones asked Kendra to put Shayla's papers in the homework box because she had forgotten to do it herself; and another morning, when Mrs. Jones asked where Joseph was and the student reported that he got sick in the cafeteria, Mrs. Jones quickly stated, "I hope you consoled him to help him feel better." This teaching of social behavior and shared responsibility pervades Mrs. Jones's classroom.

Every morning, as the students arrive, Mrs. Jones plays soft music and works around her classroom while the students work. She sets up the posters on the board that she will use for instruction, she puts grades in her grade book, she responds to parent notes, and she calls students to her desk to confer about their work. The students control themselves during this time. They enter the classroom, greet the teacher and each other, and prepare for their days without prodding from Mrs. Jones.

Data Sources

Formal data collection began in January 2002, after the students and teachers returned from winter holiday break. It continued until June, the end of the school year. Data were gathered from two sources: interviews and observations.

Interviews

Informal interviews occurred throughout the data collection period. These interviews were most often conducted early in the morning, before instruction began, at which time I asked the teachers about various literacy experiences observed either in the school or in their classrooms. On some occasions, I met with teachers during their planning period. These interviews specifically addressed something that was observed,

and often centered on individual students or literacy events observed in the classrooms. Informal interview data was recorded in the field notes.

The number of formal interviews varied with each participant. As noted earlier, Mrs. Jones refused to allow any formal interviews; therefore all of the interview data from her was collected during informal interviews. Knowing that Mrs. Jones was not going to grant a formal interview and that I would have to draw conclusions based on my field notes regarding her beliefs about teaching and to account for the loss of interview data, I spent a great deal of time gathering field note data in her classroom and engaged in numerous informal interviews. Mr. Wright, Mrs. Zeigler and Mrs. Phillips all granted two interviews. Mrs. Phillips and Mrs. Zeigler were first interviewed individually and a second interview was conducted with both teachers. In order to gather data on the history of school-wide literacy programs and decisions, I conducted an interview with the curriculum resource teacher, Mrs. Laurent. This interview, and two interviews with the principal, Mr. Dovish were also part of the interview data set. The interview data set comprises 175 pages transcribed verbatim from the audiotapes.

Each of the formal interviews started with an explanation of the process, explaining IRB forms and offering a complete process of how I planned to conduct my "member check." Then we slipped directly into conversation. Three of the 4 interviews were audio-recorded and transcribed later, therefore rendering an even more conversational tone because I was not typing on a laptop, trying to record massive amounts of data during the conversation. A formal interview guide that consisted of three open-ended questions framed the interviews:

1. How do you think literacy is developed in children?

2. How do you use your knowledge of literacy development when planning your reading and writing curriculum?

3. How does your school's mandated reading curriculum match with what you believe about literacy development in children?

These questions allowed me to explore the teachers' theoretical beliefs, to reflect on their own practice, and to reveal what they know about how the decisions were made that influenced their teaching.

Participant Observation

"Phenomenology is concerned with wholeness, with examining entities from many sides, angles, and perspectives until a unified vision of the essence of a phenomenon or experience is achieved" (Moustakas, 1994, p. 59). In order to examine the phenomenon completely, the researcher must observe the acts of teaching and learning in the classroom. Participant observation is a critical component of the data collecting process in a case study design. Participant observation "gives a firsthand account of the situation under study and, when combined with interviewing and document analysis, allows for a holistic interpretation of the phenomenon being investigated" (Merriam, 1988, p. 102). This research focuses on how teachers execute a mandatory reading program; therefore, classroom observations became a rich source of data that was collected using ethnographic fieldwork techniques to explore the complexities of teaching reading within the case specific contexts. I collected three forms of participant/observation records (Spradley, 1980): the verbatim and concrete record of what was said and observed in the classroom, the condensed and expanded account of the field notes, and an ongoing analysis of interpretations and insights into the reading experiences in the classrooms.

The number of observations was greater on the fourth grade level (nineteen in Mrs. Jones's classroom, sixteen in Mr. Wrights) because Mrs. Phillips and Mrs. Zeigler

(twelve each), in third grade, afforded their preinterns more teaching opportunities than did Mrs. Jones and Mr. Wright. On the other hand, I spent much more time in the third grade classrooms mingling with the teachers and preinterns in a more social role, and often sat through class sessions without recording them as formal observations. This data set contains fifty-nine formal observations.

Of the fifty-nine observations, forty-four were transcribed. The transcription took place as soon after the observations as possible, often occurring the afternoon the data was collected. Complete observations were transcribed, recording all notes, comments and thoughts in the field notes. All observations of reading instruction were transcribed, as well as early observations of other content area instruction.

Data Analysis

According to Creswell (1998), the intentionality of consciousness refers to the idea that consciousness is directed toward an object, and that the reality of that object is inextricably linked to a person's consciousness of the object. In this research I explored the essence, the underlying meaning, of the experience of these teachers struggling with the forces acting on teaching in a way that emphasizes the intentionality of consciousness. Therefore, data analysis identifies experiences that establish patterns in the acts of planning curriculum, teaching, or reflection on literacy experiences in the classroom. The experiences contain evidence of the teachers' efforts to work out a balance between the conflicting forces identified in the theoretical framework that grounds this research. These forces are the political climate, a mandated reading program, the teacher's own concept of teaching, and the teacher's understanding of literacy development.

The patterns were detected through a combined analysis of what I knew of the teacher's beliefs through informal interviews and their outward behavior. To do that, I used observation and interview data to identify evidence of the consciousness the participants have of the forces this research presumes to be present in varying degrees during the teachers' decision-making process (their concept of teaching, how curriculum decisions are made that impact their classrooms, and their understanding of literacy development).

The Field Notes Analysis

The field notes were hand written, and most were transcribed as soon after the observation as possible, usually the same day. This continued throughout the data collection period. The transcription of the field notes served as the first level of analysis, as during transcription I relived the day, and found myself wondering about the instruction and noticing patterns between teachers. As the project continued, I started coding data during transcription as the patterns that existed in the classroom were well established and became obvious over time.

The simultaneous process of data collection and initial analysis played a substantial role in fine-tuning my data collection plans. At the beginning of the project, I spread my time out between the classes relatively equally, observing in each classroom once a week, making sure that I collected data from all rooms. However, as I realized questions, inconsistencies, and patterns in each classroom I wanted to explore, I started tailoring my collection to enable me to dig more deeply in certain classrooms at certain times. For example, while transcribing data I realized that I was not transcribing any instructional language. I then reread all my data from that classroom, and realized that I had very

limited incidences of reading instruction. I went back to that classroom and listened specifically for instructional language. For the remainder of the project, I was careful to record data that further explored the instructional language in the classrooms.

On other occasions, after having noticed patterns during observations, I would let the observation focus on that pattern or question. For instance, during one observation I realized that the students in one of the classrooms I was observing were very sedate. Realizing that this was not the first time I noticed this, I made a quick graph of the classroom and recorded smiles--watching just the faces of the students and teacher making checks for every smile I saw. Subsequent observations in this classroom always noted the tone and excitement, or lack there of.

The physical collection and recording of the data also played a role in the analysis process. The two third grade teachers' rooms were adjacent to each other and the teachers were partners in many ways. The data were usually collected for both rooms simultaneously. Each field note page was divided in half thus creating two columns. While recording data, notes were written on each side depending on which classroom the action was observed. Therefore, when analyzing an individual classroom of one of the two teachers, the other classroom was written on the same page. This mirrored the actual experience for the teacher and the students and was intentionally kept that way throughout the project. The fourth grade classrooms, on the other hand, were independent of each other, as was the data collection and storage.

I completed phase one of my analysis process by identifying patterns of instruction in each classroom, identifying student and teacher behaviors in the classrooms, and

recording my general impressions of both the instructional delivery and the classroom environments. The major codes that emerged included:

Question/answer patterns
Academic language
Instructional delivery
FCAT preparation
Sustained reading
Content
Time to read
Ritualistic response patterns
Procedure
Student behavior
Student participation
Student off-task behavior
Student seating
Time
Sounds in the room.

These codes were given to an outside reviewer who agreed that the codes were supported by the data.

The next step in the analysis process was to group the codes into themes that could be compared across cases. To do this, I reread the complete data set and grouped the codes according to two broader themes: instructional trends and behavioral trends. Each teacher's instructional practice was microanalyzed for instructional patterns and response to student behavior. I created a skeleton schedule for each classroom and confirmed the times and patterns of instruction against raw data. Four schedules and seven descriptions of instructional methods emerged. These themes were shared with the outside reviewer, and adjustments were made. For example, an area of concern expressed by the outside reviewer was how to specifically treat the category "procedural instructions." Originally, the code included both procedural instruction and discipline/classroom procedure. However, my outside reviewer challenged this merging of themes, and suggested the two

needed to be coded as independent themes. After revisiting the raw data, I agreed, and acted upon the suggestion, creating two codes, "instructional procedure" and "behavior comments"

The final phase of analysis of field note data was a microanalysis of a single day that represented the most typical routine for each classroom. It was coded for number of minutes for each instructional pattern and frequencies of behavioral comments. When this was completed, and negative-case analysis was conducted where the raw data for each case was reviewed to ensure that the themes adequately represented the cases. A final adjustment was made and the analysis and data were presented to the outside reviewer who considered the analysis valid.

Interview Data

The initial analysis of interview data followed a similar path as the field note analysis. First, I read the interviews and wrote only minimal notes that questioned my understanding of the interviewee. I did this over a period of time so that I could see the data from a fresh perspective for each interview. Next, I reread and coded each interview labeling themes throughout. This was done for each interview independent of each other but with an awareness that some themes were common. For example, "How do you think literacy develops in children?" was a direct question and I expected each teacher to have some explanation of their understanding, but read and coded them independently, not looking for commonalities during the initial coding.

Once I was satisfied with the coding, I grouped the themes that emerged. Several themes emerged: background, class descriptors, mandates, feelings, overt action to try to balance, how literacy develops, knowledge used in teaching, rate and accuracy

checks/monitoring, Accelerated Reader, novels, writing, other challenges in teaching, and student behavior problems.

Phase two of this analysis began with rereading everything coded, making sure I agreed with the themes and the categorization of each piece of the data which was identified from the interviews so that I could trace the data (ex. Under Mandates theme: 3T2 Recognizes loss of autonomy in all subject areas 66-72). In looking at the "big picture" I detected certain themes which appeared not to be inclusive of all participants. Therefore I revisited the raw interview data specifically looking for manifestation of those particular themes. For example, in one case I realized I had not pulled many "feelings" from one teacher, so I reread the interviews and identified areas previously overlooked where feelings were expressed.

The next step in the process was to create categories to help organize the themes. I read the themes and thought about the eventual presentation of the data, which led to the creation of three broad categories, each with two subthemes: teachers' conceptual understanding of literacy development, teachers varying levels of compliance; and teachers' reflection of their experience. To test the categories, I made copies of the data strings I had coded for each theme, and manually cut and pasted them on a poster with the categories I had identified. To test the coherence of the themes, I explained them to an outside reader, from start to finish, using the data and the categories. I asked her to read the coded data, and listen to the explanation of the process of coding and theming. In the course of verbalizing my process, I realized that one of my categories needed to be changed. Adjustments were made, and the changes were re-presented to the outside reader, who then agreed that the themes reflected the data.

Finally, I conducted a member check by creating a list of statements regarding the teachers' assessment of the reading program. I brought those statements to the participating teachers and asked them to read and make changes if the statements did not accurately portray their evaluation of the program. All four teachers responded and adjustments were made in both cases where I had misinterpreted teachers' detailed evaluation of the *Reading Mastery* program. The CRT declined, stating that she was not interested in conducting a member check. I conducted a follow-up interview with the principal at the same time that I conducted his member check.

CHAPTER 4
A DAY WITH *READING MASTERY*

> People can sometimes be dissuaded from doing certain things if they are threatened with punitive consequences, but this tends to create a climate of fear, which, in turn, generates anger and resentment. It also leads people to act more cautiously. As a rule, human beings are less likely to think creatively when they perceive themselves under threat. (Kohn, 2000, p. 21)

The four teachers studied in this project were briefly introduced in Chapter 3. This chapter provides a broader picture of the teachers within the context of the school through vignettes of the four teachers' classrooms during reading. The vignettes in this chapter are drawn from the data and compiled to represent a typical day during the scheduled reading/language arts block that runs school-wide from 8:10 until 9:50 AM daily.

Formal reading instruction is not addressed outside of the reading/language block in the daily schedule. The *Reading Mastery* Teacher's Guide (Engelmann and Hanner, 1995B) offers the following sample schedule:

8:45-9:20	Teacher-directed reading lesson
9:20-9:55	Independent work-reading
9:55-10:15	Recess
10:15-10:25	Reading workcheck

This is a one hour-twenty minute block with a twenty-minute recess break. At Shoals, the reading/language arts block was a one hour-forty minute block without a recess. It did require all literacy instruction to be completed, including spelling, handwriting, language arts or writing instruction. Each teacher modified the schedule to meet their students' needs.

Table 4-1. Third grade teachers' reading/language arts schedules:

Mrs. Phillips		Mrs. Zeigler	
8:10	Homeroom dismissed/Classes change for reading	8:10	Homeroom dismissed/Classes change for reading
8:15	Spelling	8:15	Spelling
8:25	Correct Reading Workbook	8:25	Correct Reading Workbook
8:45	Word Attack	8:45	Word Attack
8:54	Main story reading/oral	8:54	Main story reading/oral
9:12	Main story reading/silent	9:06	Workbook, Cursive and Independent Reading. Students ask questions about workbook, read and complete cursive independently
9:15	Workbook, Cursive and Independent Reading. Students complete their workbook assignments at individual rates working without assistance from the teacher	9:30	Writing
		9:45	Daily Oral Language (DOL)
		9:48	Class dismissed
9:48	Class dismissed		

The schedule in third grade differs slightly from the fourth grade classrooms, as both fourth grade teachers managed to include daily practice for either the state reading or writing tests (FCAT):

Table 4-2. Fourth grade teachers' reading/language arts:

Mr. Wright		Mrs. Jones	
8:10	Class change/Prepare for reading/Begin seatwork	8:10	Class change/Review behavior expectations
8:15	FCAT Vocabulary	8:15	Word Attack
8:50	Word Attack	8:34	Main story reading/oral
9:20	Main story reading/oral	9:00	Recess
9:38	Workbooks and Independent Reading. Students complete their workbook assignments at individual rates and then read AR books	9:05	Workbooks completed independently. Students begin FCAT format essay writing when workbook is completed, with the first student usually beginning in about 10 minutes.
9:50	Class dismissed	9:50	Class dismissed

Throughout the day, a number of adults are present in the classrooms. Mrs. Long and Mrs. Foster are both instructional aides who enter the classrooms for weekly rate and accuracy checks on all students. The table below organizes the various personnel in each classrooms for the reader:

Table 4-3. Participants at a glance.

Teacher	Preinterns	Reading Materials	Reading Students
Mrs. Phillips	Ms. Jenkins Ms. Andar	*Reading Mastery III*	24 third graders
Mrs. Zeigler	Ms. Kite Ms. Tift	*Reading Mastery III*	20 third graders
Mr. Wright	Ms. James Ms. Temple	*Reading Mastery III*	11 fourth graders
Mrs. Jones	Ms. Noel Ms. Whitfield	*Reading Mastery IV*	20 fourth graders

The instructional aides arrive once a week at any time during the reading period and completes a fluency test on each reader in the class. These checks are conducted at a side or back table with the aide testing one student at a time. The number of words read per minute and the number of errors the student made are recorded on a chart in a notebook that is kept in the classroom.

Each teacher in this study supervises preinterns from a nearby university. The preinterns are paired in the classrooms, and work four mornings a week from 7:30 until 11:30 AM. The teachers determine their level of involvement regarding instruction, however, the placement is not a full internship and the preinterns were not allowed to be completely responsible for the elementary students. The university students taught reading and were in control of the classes however the teacher had to be present in the classroom at all times.

Mrs. Phillips

The first bell just rings, and the students are all milling around the classroom excitedly as they turn in their homework, greet each other and discuss their weekends. There are several adults in the room. Parents come in and out to deliver their children and make comments to the teachers. Mrs. Phillips has two preinterns present in her classroom, Ms. Andar, and Ms. Jenkins. It's Monday morning and the noise and

excitement has a very busy feeling. The boys are especially interactive, they stab at each other with their hands as they talk, laugh and smile and even occasionally give each other a pushing sort of nudge. Mrs. Phillips, Ms. Andar and Ms. Jenkins are mingling around the classroom greeting the students, smiling and chatting with individuals. Occasionally one of the adults guides students to turn in their homework or to make sure they have all their supplies ready for the day.

The cue for the students to settle down is the beginning of the school's morning news that is piped in through the closed circuit television news each morning. This morning, however, the kids just can't seem to settle down. I couldn't quite hear the news, and by the time the pledge is recited five of the boys are still grinning at each other from their individual seats. During the final segment of the program, the singing of the patriotic song, "The Grand 'Ole Flag," one of the boys starts rocking on his chair to the rhythm of the song, another is marching in place as he sings, another is squatting on his chair and laughing, a fourth is jumping up and down and yelling the words out, and a fifth is shaking his hands and body in place as he stands by his desk. One of the girls is standing at attention shouting out the lyrics of the entire song louder than any other voice in the classroom.

By 8:07, the school news has gone off the air, and Mrs. Phillips starts recording the students' job assignments for the week. Her students start to settle down a bit, but they are chatting with each other and with Ms. Jenkins and Ms. Andar. Anna calls out, "Mrs. Phillips, is it time to go to reading class yet?" Will shouts out, "Yea! Is it time to go home yet?" Mrs. Phillips goes on with the class routine, ignoring both comments.

At 8:10 each morning, Mrs. Phillips dismisses her students for reading class. Mrs. Phillips teaches a group of twenty-four on-level third grade students that includes seventeen of her homeroom students and seven other students that come from other homerooms. Ms. Jenkins starts passing out the students' reading books getting ready to start reading. A student leaves the room with the attendance. Several students exit via the hall door, others go from Mrs. Phillips's classroom to Mrs. Zeigler's classroom on the other side of the folding wall, and a few walk straight through Mrs. Zeigler's classroom and exit via the exterior door. At the same time, a number of students enter the room from the hall door. Some of these students go directly to seats in Mrs. Phillips's room, others line up at the gap between the two rooms and wait until Mrs. Zeigler's class is ready for them to enter. By 8:15 the students in both classrooms are settled in their seats and ready to work.

Today, like every day, the reading segment starts with one teacher directing the spelling lesson for both Mrs. Phillips's and Mrs. Zeigler's class. The students all have their spelling lists, their *Reading Mastery* workbooks, and spiral notebooks on their desks. All students also have binders for notebook paper. Standing between the two rooms, Mrs. Phillips calls attention to the class by throwing her voice loud enough to travel over the student noise: "Is everybody ready, we'll do spelling now." After a very brief pause, she continues, "Okay ready, first word, *voice*, spell the word. *(Thud)*" Mrs. Phillips beats an overhead pen on the teacher's manual, making a "thud" sound to cue each letter as the students drone, "*(thud)* v-*(thud)* o-*(thud)* i-*(thud)* c-*(thud)* e."

Mrs. Phillips, continues, "Good, what word? *(Thud)*" and the students respond, "voice."

Mrs. Phillips continues in this fashion, "Next word, ___, spell the word. *(Thud)*" Mrs. Phillips goes through the spelling list in this way, standing in one spot between the two classrooms, calling out each word on the weekly spelling list. Occasionally, Mrs. Phillips asks the students to repeat the spelling of a word because the students are not spelling the letters in unison. Ms. Andar and Ms. Jenkins are pacing around the room watching the students work.

After the last word is spelled out, Mrs. Phillips says, "Good job boys and girls." As Mrs. Phillips starts putting away the spelling manual, she walks to the middle of her classroom and asks the students, "What is common in these words?" One student speaks up saying, the /oi/ sound, to which Mrs. Phillips responds, "Good." Mrs. Phillips then reminds the students that the /oi/ sound is spelled either *o-i* or *o-y*, and to be sure to notice the difference when they are studying their words. At this closing remark, the students all put away their spelling books and take out their work homework calendars.

Every Monday the students record their weekly spelling homework in their homework calendar books. As Mrs. Phillips writes the assignments on the laminated calendar tacked to the front chalkboard, the students call out their assignments. The pace is very rapid. I lose track of the assignments that are being recorded. I cannot read the writing on the laminated calendar where Mrs. Phillips is writing because the print is too small and there is no other posting of these assignments in the room. The students record the assignments, and slip their calendars in their desks.

At 8:25, Mrs. Phillips is ready to start correcting the *Reading Mastery* workbook assignment from the previous day's lesson. She stands next to the overhead in the front of the classroom and tells the students to turn to page 191. At these directions, Joey (who

is sitting by the side panel dividing the two rooms and about 5 feet from Will's desk) yells over to Will, "Why we gotta go back? We *were* on page 280." Hearing Joey's question, Ms. Jenkins tells the class, "That is the workbook page," to which Will responds, "Oh" as he loudly slaps his reading book closed and slides it in his desk, pulling out his workbook and opening it to the correct page.

Mrs. Phillips looks up at the class and starts reading out answers to the workbook assignment. The students quietly make corrections in their workbooks. Mrs. Phillips reads the first three sentences, with the correct answers, and at number four, she calls on a student to read.

The first section of the workbook assignment is corrected by 8:35, and Mrs. Phillips directs the students to look at part two in their workbooks. She begins immediately by calling out correct answers in the next section of the workbook. The students are circling the words in the "run" family. The instructions are to underline some words, and circle others, but, again, the directions are not clearly reviewed and I am unable to grasp the complete assignment. I look around the room for some visual cues that can help me follow the corrections, and find none.

It is now 8:42. The lesson continues orally. The next section in the workbook pertains to the concept understanding of city, state and country. Mrs. Phillips reads the correct answers and the students make necessary corrections in their books. As soon as Mrs. Phillips completes the corrections, she instructs the students to get their reading books out and turn to page 283.

At 8:48, the students are already going over their word lists for their daily reading assignment. The exact same procedure for choral response is used for this word

introduction as was used for spelling. Mrs. Phillips says, "Let's read the words together. "First word, what word? *(Thud)*" and the students respond, "Palm" to which Mrs. Phillips responds, "Next word, what word? *(Thud)*" "Coconut" respond the students, and the class works through all the words in this ritualistic response pattern. After progressing through the six columns of words (in this case a total of twenty-six words), Mrs. Phillips quickly goes through the seventh column, and for each of these five words, Mrs. Phillips gives a brief, single definition and uses the words in a sentence. Then, Mrs. Phillips reads a sentence that uses a definition for the word and requires the students to repeat the sentence, using the vocabulary word. Finally, Mrs. Phillips directs the students to look back at the words as columns, and she asks the students to read the columns of words. The class then recites the columns of words. The next step is for individual students to read the columns of words. By 8:53, the students have progressed to this section of the reading lesson. This morning, seven students are asked to read the columns, each student reads a different column of words.

At 8:54, Mrs. Phillips moves to the reading passage by saying, "Everybody, find part B in your textbook." Mrs. Phillips reminds the students to notice that there is a "2 error limit" for the beginning part of this story. Mrs. Phillips reminds the student that they need to read aloud and answer on cue when she asks questions, and immediately Mrs. Phillips starts calling on single students to read aloud. At this time in the lesson, Ms. Andar and Ms. Jenkins who had been pacing around the room sit at the table in the back of the classroom and start quietly correcting a pile of student papers that awaited them.

Each student's turn ends with a question or two as scripted in the teacher's manual. To answer the questions, individual students are either called on by name or the class responds together if Mrs. Phillips asks "everybody" and signals her cue for choral, group response. Mrs. Phillips calls on Brad to read. Brad calls out in class often and is in constant motion at his seat. Again today he doesn't know where to start reading when it is his turn. Mrs. Phillips quietly walks up next to his desk and points to the place where he needs to start reading, and the class continues. Today, Mrs. Phillips calls on a series of students who each read one or two sentences, and she asks a number of questions during the oral reading of the passage which lasts until 9:12, when Mrs. Phillips instructs the class to finish reading the passage to themselves and then to complete the workbook assignment for this lesson.

Almost instantly upon being instructed to read the rest of the passage, Brad loudly announces that he has finished reading. At this, Will looks up and shouts, "Brad, you aren't finished reading!" Will pushes his book forward on his desk and refuses to read. No one responds to either of the boys, and after a long, quiet pause, both the boys start working in their workbooks.

By 9:15, all the students are writing in their workbooks. The students are very familiar with the routine, and as they start their work, Ms. Andar and Ms. Jenkins now start walking around, looking over the students' shoulders. They do not offer assistance, and the students do not ask. Mrs. Phillips is now quietly working at her desk. When the students start to finish their workbook assignment, Ms. Jenkins and Ms. Andar pass out cursive handwriting worksheets and then return to sit at the back table, waiting for the students to turn in their workbooks.

The classroom gradually becomes very noisy, first with a few students talking, by 9:35, most of the students are socializing more than they are working. They talk among themselves as they complete their handwriting, turn in their workbooks and their cursive papers at the back table in the classroom where Ms. Andar and Ms. Jenkins are sitting, they return to their seats to read a trade book. Today, like any day, there are two or three girls who are focused on reading their trade books while the rest of the students are talking to each other with their books laid open on their desks or on their laps. The students continue in this independent manner until 9:48 when other classmates start to return from the hall, Mrs. Phillips walks to the center of the classroom indicating the end of reading class.

Mrs. Zeigler

Mrs. Zeigler is also teaching a group of on-grade-level third grade students, like Mrs. Phillips's reading class, Mrs. Zeigler's students come from a number of different homerooms. Mrs. Zeigler has twenty students in her reading class, twelve of whom are in her homeroom class. Mrs. Zeigler has been teaching for fifteen years and is a certified special education teacher who has extensive experience teaching *Reading Mastery*. She has taught levels 1-5 during her tenure at Shoals Elementary School. She also has two preinterns, Ms. Tift and Ms. Kite. Mrs. Zeigler requires her students to be much quieter than Mrs. Phillips's students. This morning, like every morning, there is a low humming noise in Mrs. Zeigler's classroom as the students engage in their morning routine. Most of the students appear to have completed their math worksheet, and are chatting quietly with their tablemates. Ms. Tift and Ms. Kite quietly greet the students, moving from

student group to student group and speaking in low voices to the students. The students chat quietly to their tablemates as they start working on their morning assignment.

In a voice elevated just above the student noise, Mrs. Zeigler is calling the names of individual students to stand at their desks. When she has finished the list of names, she calmly tells the class that this group of students has turned in their field trip permission slips, and if the students still seated want to go on the trip, they need to remember to bring in their permission slips. The students standing take their seats.

At 8:10, a group of students arrive for reading class and line up at the back entrance to the classroom. Mrs. Zeigler notices them, and immediately tells the class, "If you are leaving for reading, I'll see you later." At this dismissal, several students exit the classroom, and the others who have lined up waiting to enter file in and take their seats.

Five minutes later, the students all seated and attentive, Mrs. Zeigler addresses the class; "We need to start spelling. Get out your spelling list. We'll do spelling like we always do. If you're not paying attention I'll pull your card," which is in a pocket chart on the wall used for behavior control. The students each have a pocket labeled with their name, in each pocket are three cards, a green, a yellow and a red. The cards are all placed in that order each morning; the students all start the day on green. As needed, Mrs. Zeigler takes the top card out, exposing the next colored card. If all three cards are pulled from the student's pocket, that student's parent is contacted and informed of the behavior difficulties that occur in the classroom.

Mrs. Zeigler pauses by the behavior chart as Mrs. Phillips calls both the classes to attend to spelling. At this time, both classes proceed through the spelling lesson. Mrs. Zeigler is listening to Mrs. Phillips and watching her students' performance in the task.

Mrs. Zeigler's two preinterns, Ms. Kite and Ms. Tift stand off to the side of the classroom, by the room divider, also watching the students.

As soon as Mrs. Phillips finishes the spelling lesson, Mrs. Zeigler directs her class: "Last week we had double consonants and you spelled the words on your test with a single consonant. This week we have the o-o spelling that makes the sound /u/ and the o-i spelling that makes the sound /oy/. Be careful when you take your test this week. Now put this in the spelling section of your notebook and take out your calendars." Mrs. Zeigler then walks to the overhead projector, turns it on, and records the week's spelling assignments on the screen for the students to copy. Mrs. Zeigler draws little boxes with the dates and then writes the assignments:

28	29	30	31	1
	ABC Order	7 Sentences	Word Rap	3 x each Tests

Mrs. Zeigler walks away from the overhead, to her desk, and instructs the students to finish their calendars and then open their workbooks.

Simultaneous with the classroom on the other side of the room divider, at 8:25 Mrs. Zeigler turns off the overhead and starts calling out the correct answers for the workbook pages the students have completed during the previous reading lesson. Mrs. Zeigler pauses when needed to allow the students to make corrections in their workbooks. Mrs. Zeigler allows the students to call out questions if they are confused. Today when number three's answer is identified as "a half hour" by Mrs. Zeigler, Hank asks, "Is thirty minutes okay?" Mrs. Zeigler responds, "It's okay to have either a half hour or thirty minutes" and continues, "Number 4, more time." At this point, there is an unnatural pause in Mrs. Zeigler's teaching. The pause creates a silence that allows Mrs. Zeigler to

hear Mrs. Phillips on the other side of the room divider. Mrs. Zeigler has already called the answer out for number 5, and Mrs. Philips is just beginning to call on a student to answer number 4. After listening to the teacher next door for these few seconds, Mrs. Zeigler continues to read the sentences in the workbook aloud, while next door, Mrs. Phillips continues to call on students to read the sentences.

Mrs. Zeigler has reached number thirteen. Looking at the class she says, "Listen carefully. I'm going to draw it because lots of you are getting it wrong." At this, Mrs. Zeigler walks to the overhead, turns it on, and draws a figure and labels it as she calls out the answers to the questions. The labels that Mrs. Zeigler is marking on the figure are the answers to the questions asked about the various parts of a boat, the bulkhead, wall, and deck. Mrs. Zeigler continues, drawing a compass rose, and labeling the directions on the compass with the capital letters, N, S, W, and E. She then gets a clean, blank overhead, and draws a circle, labels the directions again with the letters, N, S, W, and E and places letters in the circle as she names three countries and one continent: Canada, Mexico, South America and the United States. Mrs. Zeigler continues in this fashion, and boxes the top letter, she stresses to the students, "This is a box; it is not underlined." She then moves to question number seventeen, and tells the class, "I don't want anyone to get this wrong" and starts giving the class answers to city, state and country questions. At exactly 8:42, after seventeen minutes of correction time, Mrs. Zeigler tells the students to put their workbooks away and get out their textbook.

At this time, Mrs. Zeigler walks to the stool next to the overhead projector, sits down, and waits for the students to get their books ready, reminding the class that they are working for points. Ms. Kite and Ms. Tift pace around the classroom, "roaming" as

they watch the students prepare for their lesson. At 8:45, Mrs. Zeigler begins the lesson by going over the words in the familiar ritualistic pattern. Rather than beating the overhead pen on the teacher's manual, Mrs. Zeigler is using a clicker sold in pet stores. It makes a distinct metal click sound. Mrs. Zeigler: "Let's read the words together. First word, what word? *(Click)"* Upon hearing the sound, the students respond, "Palm" and Mrs. Zeigler continues, "Next word, what word? *Click."* "Coconut" respond the students in unison, and the class works through all the words in the next five minutes. This is the same lesson that Mrs. Phillips's class is completing: a total of twenty-six words in six columns and a seventh column of 5 vocabulary words. At 8:50, Mrs. Zeigler has introduced all the words, and individual students are now reading a column at a time.

Ms. Foster walks in the room. She is carrying a clipboard and a stopwatch, whose chord is dangling from her hand as she carries the clipboard. Mrs. Foster is one of the two aides in the school whose job is to monitor the students' reading progress. Obviously chewing gum as she walks, she heads directly to the record books on Mrs. Zeigler's shelf, removes a large notebook and walks to a student. She taps the girl on the shoulder, and walks to the round table in the back of the classroom where they both sit down. This ritual marks the start of the weekly fluency tests that will record the number of words per minute the students can read, and the number of errors made in the passage. As soon as Julie finishes her fluency test, she leaves the table, taps another student on the shoulder, and the routine continues until all the students present in the classroom have been time tested for their "rate and fluency test."

It takes Ms. Foster a minute to get seated in the classroom and begin the testing. In the meantime, Ms. Zeigler continues in an uninterrupted flow of word calling in the

Reading Mastery lesson. The class is compliant with no behavior infractions until 8:54. At that time, Ada, a Hispanic female seated just three feet from me, starts to very loudly bang the chair at the desk next to hers, slapping the chair repeatedly against the side of the empty desk. Ada looks directly at me, makes eye contact, and holds her stare as she continues slapping the chair against the desk. Another student at her table, Jamey, looks at Ada with a distorted face, and stretches her legs below the two desks to enable her to reach the chair legs, and kicks the chair away from the desk. This action rattles the desk and causes a pencil to fall off the desk into the chair. Ada smiles, picks the pencil up off the empty chair, and starts drawing something.

The distraction stopped and the students continue reading the story. It is 8:55. The student reading aloud is reading in a very low voice and the noise from Mrs. Phillips's class is louder than the reader. Mrs. Zeigler calls on another student to read, but the student hesitated because he doesn't know exactly where to start reading, so Mrs. Zeigler calls on another student who starts reading immediately. He also reads very quietly, and Mrs. Phillips class is still generating a lot of noise. Mrs. Zeigler is pacing the reading, following the script in the *Reading Mastery* teacher's manual:

John finishes reading his sentence.

Mrs. Z: Class, how do you think they felt? *(click)*

S1: Sad

Mrs. Z: Sad (monotone). If you were in a boat that was on fire, how would you feel? *(click)*

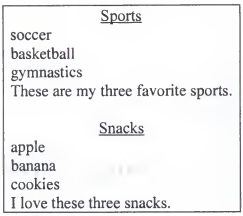
S2: Frightened!

Mrs. Z: Yes, that's a good word. (Calls on another S to read)

The interaction above is repeated over and over during oral reading. Mrs. Zeigler again calls on a student to read who does not know where the class is and Mrs. Zeigler skips her just like she had the previous student. After the next reader, Mrs. Zeigler asks two more questions. Another student is called on to read, and he starts at the wrong sentence. Mrs. Zeigler calmly says, "Kerry, that is not where we are, Julie, will you please read." The class continues in this manner until 9:06, when they complete the passage and are instructed to do the workbook pages for lesson 64. At this time, both Ms. Kite and Ms. Tift circulate around the room assisting individual students who raise their hands and asked questions.

At 9:12 Mrs. Zeigler addresses the class, offering a clarification of what happens in the water around a ship when it sinks. At 9:15, the students were still working in their workbooks, however both Ms. Kite and Ms. Tift start passing out the cursive worksheets for the students to complete. The class is quiet and all students seem to be engaged in their work. Mrs. Zeigler reminds the class, "When you are done with your cursive we are reading books. If you are not reading, we will flip cards." By 9:26, the students are quietly chatting with each other, reading, working on their cursive worksheets or completing their *Reading Mastery* workbooks. This continues for 4 more minutes, and at 9:30 Mrs. Zeigler shifts to writing.

Mrs. Zeigler stands in the front middle of her classroom and addresses the class, "You were supposed to have done 2 sentences; one for sports and one for snacks." As the students shuffle around papers getting ready for writing, Mrs. Zeigler turns on the overhead showing the class work from yesterday:



Many of the students start writing, and Mrs. Zeigler sternly reminds the class that this was homework, and that they should not be writing at this time. She then asks the students to close their notebooks because they do not need them at this moment. Since their homework was done on loose notebook paper, various students are asked to share their sentences. At 9:38, many students have read aloud their sentences, and Mrs. Zeigler asks the class, "If you had to come up with a sentence of People in my Family, what would it include?" Mrs. Zeigler then writes on a new overhead blank film:

Mrs. Zeigler then asks the students "How would you come up with a sentence for zoo animals?" and writes "Zoo Animals" on the overhead under the family topic. One student speaks up, offering the sentence, "I like zoo animals." Mrs. Zeigler asks for other

thoughts, and more students speak up offering similar sentences. Then Mrs. Zeigler tells the students to get a piece of paper, and instructs them, "If you don't have a sentence about sports, quickly write one." Mrs. Zeigler then puts another clean overhead film up and writes a column of three words, *soccer, basketball* and *gymnastics.* She asks the class, "What's my category?" and repeats the word "sports" after the students and writes it above the column of words, underlining it once. She then asks the students "How can I tell my category in a sentence?" and repeats each sentence after the students share: "I like sports"; "Sports are fun"; and "I play sports." Mrs. Zeigler writes a sentence below the column while the students offer their ideas, "These are my three favorite sports." While the students are sharing their sentences, one student offers two sentences and Mrs. Zeigler cuts her off and says, "You gave two sentences." After this correction, Mrs. Zeigler writes above the listed sports, "I think sports are terrific" and the overhead now is complete. Mrs. Zeigler walks around the classroom while the students continue to share their sentences aloud:

I think sports are terrific.

Sports

soccer
basketball
gymnastics
These are my three favorite sports.

Finally, Mrs. Zeigler says to the class, "We are quickly running out of time so quickly put these back in your notebook... quietly." It is 9:45, and Mrs. Zeigler goes to the chalkboard to write out the daily oral language sentence, "are we going to practis

before the last game" and the students make the necessary corrections as their last assignment for the day. At 9:48, Mrs. Zeigler dismisses her reading class.

Mr. Wright

Walking in Mr. Wright's room in the morning is a quiet activity. Mr. Wright is engaged at the front of his classroom, ordering papers, and his two preinterns, Ms. James and Ms. Temple, are working quietly correcting papers at the small table in the back of the classroom. Every morning Mr. Wright has the classroom lights off except for the strip of lighting in the back of the classroom, and the overhead on ready to greet his students, and this morning is no different; the message is colorful and directive with an overall cheerful tone:

Good Morning ☺
* Please remember to:
- unpack
- sharpen pencils
- use the restroom
- turn in missing assignment
* Then finish
Reading books and taking tests!
* After that, please read quietly at your seat.
And Have a great day!

The students arrive, unpack their backpacks, and quietly greet their friends as they follow the procedures laid out for them. The school news begins, Mr. Wright is circulating among the students' desks quietly approaching some students and answering questions for others. A few of the students are still sharpening their pencils, but the remainder of the class is sitting quietly at their desks, facing the front of the room. Some students are looking down at their books on their desks, appearing to be reading. This morning's news announced the "AR point clubs" and when the news is off, Mr. Wright encourages

his students to join the highest point clubs, to read and to take tests "when you have a spare moment."

Mr. Wright continues addressing his students, announcing that he will have lunch with students in the classroom today, that the people attending will be given an invitation, and that he hopes that all his students will get an invitation. The "meetings" are one of the ways that Mr. Wright rewards his students. "My goal is for every single person to come to those meetings." He reminds the students that the "meetings" are a chance for the students to have lunch in the classroom and then go outside to play.

The students recognize that it is 8:10, and following their usual routine, they clear off their desks, putting everything away, and head out to their reading classes. Mr. Wright's reading students are below grade level students who struggled with reading last year. There are eleven students in the class: two white males (Jonathan and Daniel), three white females (Mandy, Sarah and Lydia), two black males (Raymond and Cortez), and four black females (Latoya, Jasmine, Sabrina and Precious). Four of these students are in Mr. Wright's homeroom, the rest come from other fourth grade classroom.

By 8:12, there are a few students seated and ready for reading. Mr. Wright starts the day with a vocabulary exercise (Vocabulary Building Activity) designed to prepare students for the FCAT. The materials for this exercise are taken from a program available on line (see http://www.tampareads.com). Mr. Wright tells the students they can get started on the word scramble section of their vocabulary because they don't need the meaning of the words to be able to unscramble them. As the students begin working, Mr. Wright passes out positive behavior points to the students. Mr. Wright's behavior management includes rewarding the students who collect points by allowing them to

choose a prize from the prize box. "Jonathan, you came to class prepared and following directions, please give yourself two points" and "Jasmine, you came to class prepared and following directions, please give yourself two points." This continues for two more students, and then Mr. Wright walks to the doorway and hurries in the students lingering in the hall. At 8:14, Mr. Wright walks over to the word wall, and Mandy slowly walks in the door. Mr. Wright says with traces of compassion and sternness, "Mandy, you need to come to school on time."

At 8:15, Mr. Wright is standing under a list of words written on poster paper. He has a meter stick in his hand that he is leaning on as if it were a cane in front of him as he addresses his students. Calling all students to attend, Mr. Wright tells the students to put down their pencils, turn their papers over so they are paying attention, and reminds them, "This is something we do every day."

At that moment, Latoya enters the classroom. She drops all her books just after she passes the place where Mr. Wright is instructing. Mr. Wright ignores her, and tells the students to attend to their work. Mr. Wright then starts the vocabulary review.

First, while Mr. Wright points to the words on the list hanging on the wall, the students recite the words, Mr. Wright repeats the words. He spends three minutes introducing each of the eight words to the students making sure that the students can pronounce them correctly. At 8:18. Mr. Wright returns to the first word on the list, and begins eliciting the students' prior knowledge of the word meaning.

The first word is *tongue*. Mr. Wright asks the students to show their tongues. The students all smile, stick out their tongues and look around the classroom. Then Mr. Wright puts his foot up on a nearby desk, and explains that his shoe also has a tongue,

and shows the students the tongue in his shoe. He then smiles at the students and says, "It would be interesting to go home tonight and tell your parents, 'Mama, I have three tongues.'" The students smile and Mr. Wright quickly moves on to the next word, *organ*. Mr. Wright walks to the chalkboard and writes the word on the board, and then beside the word he draws a sketch of the musical organ and another circle in which he sketches the organs in our bodies. Mr. Wright then talks about the similarities in our hearts pumping blood and the musical organ pumping air.

It's 8:22 when Mr. Wright returns to the word list and begins discussing the word *skull*. He tells the students that skulls are used in scary movies, and that "they put skulls on those movies so you will think you might end up like that too!" A few of the students giggle, and Mr. Wright continues his word introduction, moving to the next word, *forehead*. He reminds the students that they sweat on their foreheads during PE class, when Mr. Wright moves on to the word *limb*, he returns to the chalkboard and quickly sketches a tree trunk with a limb extending to the right of the trunk, Mr. Wright compares that limb to the limbs on our bodies; our arms and our legs.

The next word is *nature*, which Mr. Wright explains as something that is "natural, to which nothing has been added, there are no third party additions." Mr. Wright explains, it is "like orange juice when it is all natural, nothing has been added."

Mr. Wright now says, "I didn't think of another word when we were on the third word. *Chest*. Has anyone ever heard of this word?" There is a mumble of response from the students, and Mr. Wright comments, "If you think you know, remember please raise your hand and take a risk because you never know." Then Mr. Wright tells the students, "Let's flip your page." The class turns the page over so that their vocabulary worksheet

is face up. Mr. Wright reminds them, "Remember, this is all listening, paying attention and working from memory. We are all doing your listening activity."

Mr. Wright walks to the table, picks up his clipboard, and says, "First One, Number One."

Latoya shouts out, "I need one."

The office intercom interrupts with a request to have a student go to the office. Mr. Wright explains that the student is in another reading class at the moment.

Mr. Wright continues, "This is the name of the bone that protects your brain." Mr. Wright walks to Raymond, leans over and speaks to him.

Mr. Wright repeats the sentence, "This is the name of the bone that protects your head."

Mr. Wright tells Cortez to get finished with number one because we are about to go on to number two.

Mr. Wright continues, "This can either be a rack of drawers or the part of your body where your ribs can be found." After a pause, Mr. Wright repeats and elaborates, "This can be a rack of drawers or the part of your body where your ribs can be found and where you breathe in."

After a short pause, Mr. Wright says, "We have to go quicker because some people are ready. Three. The third one. Heart, brain and skin are all types of these." Mandy raises her hand, and Mr. Wright responds, "Mandy, we are not answering questions during a test."

"Four" continues Mr. Wright. "This is in your mouth and you use it to talk, taste and if you are silly, you can stick it out at someone." Someone chuckles.

"Five. This comes from the bottom- these are the branches of a tree or your arms and legs." Mr. Wright is working faster. He reminds the students, "Remember if you have any questions we'll help you independently when you finish. Number six: orange juice would be all this if all you did was squeeze the orange."

After a very brief pause, Mr. Wright continues, "Number seven: If we talked about all the animals, all the plants, all the ocean, all the everything that's out there doing its thing without anybody bothering it, you're talking about this." Mr. Wright does not repeat this question, but goes on to "Last one: Part of your face. If you're ever watching that crazy TV show *The Simpson's*, he goes like this, watch." Mr. Wright thumps his forehead and smiles.

Mr. Wright announces, "You have five minutes and then you'll have to finish later." As soon as he says this, two students simultaneously get out of their seats. Daniel walks to Ms. Temple who is sitting at the table and said to her, "That was easy. I just did it." Ms. Temple told him to go sit down. The other student, Mandy, walks to the pencil sharpener. She stands at the sharpener with her pencil in the machine for almost two minutes. At 8:34, Mr. Wright walks up to her and asks her to return to her seat. Mr. Wright then paces and chats with the students as they complete their assignment. As the students finish, he gives them "two points for finishing their work in a timely manner." Mr. Wright tells the class to read silently at their seats until he is ready to continue their lesson.

At 8:50, Mr. Wright called for the students to get out their *Reading Mastery* books. Mr. Wright announces that the class will be working on lesson 47. They will catch up

because of the days off this week. Mr. Wright then begins reminding the students that they were working on speedometers.

Mr. Wright looks at Latoya and says in a stern voice, "...open your text...open your text..." and he reminds the students to be sitting in the learning position. He said, "Yesterday you were not in the learning position when I called on you and you didn't know where the class was reading. Staying in learning position helps you to follow along."

At 8:54 the class started vocabulary recitation for *Reading Mastery*, and for the first time today, Mr. Wright signals for group response. Mr. Wright uses a clicker like Mrs. Zeigler, the distinct metal click indicates that students are to respond in unison. Mr. Wright goes through this very quickly, using the scripted format in the teacher's manual. At 8:58 the students are told to repeat spelling the words because they are calling out too rapidly and are not in unison.

At 9:08, the individual word reading is complete and the class is now reading columns of words. Sarah is lying back in her chair and leaning on the desk behind her. Daniel is disengaged; Mr. Wright calls on him to read, and since he doesn't know where the class was, Mr. Wright skips his chance to read aloud. Jasmine and Raymond are sitting on their feet. Precious is playing with her toes. Daniel just read a column of words with errors, and is now chatting with Latoya. Cortez and Raymond are talking with hand signals across the room. Lydia is playing with paper balls on the desk behind her. Mr. Wright continues to call on various students to read the columns of words. He asks Daniel to reread his column without errors and when he does, Mr. Wright tells him to record 2 points.

9:20: the class is reading the passage and they are answering questions as they read. Latoya starts tapping her foot. Cortez's head is on his desk edge and he is looking at his lap with his book open on his desk. Now he is kneeling in front of his desk rather than sitting on his chair.

Raymond and Daniel's heads are curled up and they are looking at their laps. Mandy's head is resting on the book on her desk.

Latoya whispers aloud to Ms. Temple who is just walking quietly around the room. Sabrina just finished reading and Mr. Wright tells her to record two extra bonus points for reading aloud quickly and loudly. Mr. Wright asks the class, "How fast is car A moving? *(Click)*" After the students respond, he asks, "How fast was car B moving? *(Click)*" and again, after their response, he asks, "How fast was car C moving. *(Click)*" During these questions, Mr. Wright walks to Jasmine's desk and redirects her, "You need to put away the pencil and attend so that you can answer questions."

Mr. Wright tells another student to follow along and then compliments Mandy and tells her to read aloud. Mr. Wright tells the class to follow along and Mandy starts reading. Soon Mr. Wright stops for questions, and after the questioning, Daniel continues reading, loudly and clearly.

Mr. Wright walks to Latoya and says, "Please continue" as he points to the spot for her to read and tells her to sit up so that she can read. Latoya reads very well. Mr. Wright compliments her, noting to the class, "Latoya read aloud nicely."

Latoya just finished reading the passage in Part B, and Mr. Wright tells the students to give themselves points again and talks about how important it is to pay attention. Mr. Wright says they only "have to read for 10-15 minutes then they can work in their

workbooks" and he knows it is hard to "put up with all this stuff" and directs the students' attention to Part C, and asks, "What's going to happen in this story?"

The students respond in overlapping responses, to which Mr. Wright responds, "we'll read on to see if your prediction is right or not right." As the students read, Mr. Wright paces through the rows and between students continuously. Mr. Wright walks to Cortez and points to where he needs to read. After Cortez reads, Mr. Wright calls on Jonathan to read. After Jonathan reads, Mr. Wright announces, "Another excellent job." Mr. Wright asks another student to read and helps with fluency as the child reads. Mr. Wright continues pacing. He comments, "Another nice job." The pace is rapid; students oral reading turns average twenty-nine seconds.

Mr. Wright tells Latoya that she will probably be next if she sits quietly and in the same breath calls on Precious to read. Latoya closes her book and puts her head down on her desk. Mr. Wright says to Latoya, "You have a *Number One* for not paying attention to the task at hand." Being given a *Number One* indicates that Latoya was not following rule number one, "Pay attention to the task at hand." At this, Ms. James walks over to Latoya's desk and opens her book for her. Latoya makes an angry face but watches the book, and Mr. Wright calls on her to read next.

Mr. Wright tells Jonathan to give himself points.

Latoya reached the end of the story, and Mr. Wright tells the class the story is over and begins talking about the story. He does not question the students at each one of the comprehension points in the story, instead, he has the student read through the passage in a more round-robin style, and then asks the series of comprehension check questions that are in the presentation book.

During this discussion, Mr. Wright says, "Raymond has a *Number One*. Please pay attention." Mr. Wright is rereading a section of the passage with inflection and the class is trying to figure out what the "nice warm yellow" is that is referred to in the passage. The students do not offer suggestions as to what the "nice warm yellow" might be. Mr. Wright says, "Herman has landed on the nice warm yellow which turns out to be a taxi cab and Herman gets a ride to the airport." Mr. Wright continues asking questions using the clicker indicating he wants the students to choral respond to the questions he will ask about the story. Mr. Wright stops reading and gives out *Number Twos* to "two unidentified people who know who they are." A "*Number Two*" means that the student has not followed classroom rule number two, "Adjust your talking to the situation." Mr. Wright talks about what a jumbo jet is and the same time he writes something with a pen in the book on the table in the front of the room.

Mr. Wright continues discussing the story. Mr. Wright asks the students how big Herman is. Latoya yells out "One centimeter" two times. Mr. Wright says, "We are showing not telling." Mr. Wright wants the students to show a space with their fingers that indicates the length of the fly.

Mr. Wright starts talking about candy. This has the students interested. There are smiles on faces for the first time today. Mr. Wright explains how the fly goes after the candy; the fly makes two circles and an S shaped flight. Mr. Wright makes the motion in the air. The students make the same motion in the air. Mr. Wright talks about how the fly can't get the candy, Mr. Wright asks, "Why?" Latoya says, "The woman probably closed the purse."

Mr. Wright continues talking about what they learned. He reviews the concept of speed noting that cabs move fast, but the wind moves faster. Mr. Wright's review is continuous with no pause. He uses no pictures or other visual aides. He mentions "QAR" and "Author and you" as he explains how some questions are in the book and some you have to figure out. Then Mr. Wright tells the students to get their workbooks ready for lesson 47, and tells them to complete the lesson and reminds them if they finish the workbook they may read for a few minutes.

At 9:38 the students start the assignment in their workbooks. Mr. Wright softly says that the workbooks will allow him to see what the students understood from today's reading. As the students start working, Mr. Wright walks to Raymond and comforts him. Mr. Wright shares his jacket with Raymond. As the students work, Mr. Wright chats with them about scratches and itches.

Raymond is all wrapped up in Mr. Wright's jacket and is concentrating on his workbook. Mr. Wright gets a piece of paper for Latoya, and walks to her desk and gently converses with her. Mr. Wright stops at Cortez's desk and asks if he is skipping questions on purpose to go back later. Mr. Wright keeps walking; heads back to the table to briefly interact with the preinterns who are seated in the back of the classroom, and then paces towards the students and through the classroom. Mr. Wright stops at Raymond's desk and talks to him.

Mr. Wright tells the class this is independent work and says, "All that happens is we'll ask you to flip to that page." Mr. Wright tells the students, "All the questions were already discussed and if you don't know the answer it's because your mind was not exactly focused. That happens sometimes, but you can go back in the book and look."

The room is cold; the air conditioning is malfunctioning again. All the students are quietly working in their workbooks. Mr. Wright is standing at the table in the front of the classroom writing. The preinterns are now circulating to help a few students who have raised their hands. Some students start putting their *Reading Mastery* books away quietly and get trade books from the back table to read.

At 9:47, four students are still at their seats working in their workbooks. Mr. Wright and Ms. James try to help Mandy answer questions in her workbook. Jonathan and Daniel have rushed to the back of the classroom to read on beanbag seats, making a lot of noise with the stuffing. Cortez joins them, sitting on two beanbags himself. Sarah tries to join them. Cortez does not give her a bag. She sits on the floor. There's talking. Mr. Wright corrects Sarah, reminding her that there's two things that you have to do to be on the beanbags, he holds his fingers up to count as he lists:

Read.

Stay quiet.

Sarah returns to her desk and sits with a book closed on her lap. Latoya is out of her seat and sweeping the floor.

The cold is penetrating my back from the room behind me.

Cortez is still on the two beanbags. He gets up to get a book from the table, and Sarah races to one of the beanbags he deserted. Mr. Wright sends Cortez back to his seat because he has no book.

It is 9:50. The students put their books away, and Mr. Wright reminds them that if they earned fifteen points in the past two days that they should stop at the treasure box on their way out of the classroom. A small group of students gather in the front of the room

around the box. The classroom quickly fills up with returning homeroom students as some of the reading students get their rewards and hurry out the door.

Mrs. Jones

This year is Mrs. Jones's first experience using the *Reading Mastery* curriculum. When the principal gave her the assignment during preplanning (the week before school began), Mrs. Jones was discouraged. She had been very happy teaching reading using the Pegasus Reading program the school had used in the past. However, Mrs. Jones expressed that even though "I disagree with the philosophy and execution of *Reading Mastery*, I will do what I am told because I believe that is the right thing to do" [Field notes, Jan 29, 2002]. However, Mrs. Jones did ask for training before she was required to execute the program in her classroom. Since the training was not scheduled until some time in September, Mrs. Jones was allowed to begin the school year using her previous reading methods, and not start *Reading Mastery* until October. Furthermore, Mrs. Jones was accustomed to providing an hour of writing instruction daily to her homeroom. The *Reading Mastery* program required more minutes to teach than the previous program, so reading class time needed to be extended. These changes in curriculum required a new schedule that allowed teachers to follow the *Reading Mastery* scripted lessons while not eliminating writing instruction. The fourth grade teachers and the schools' curriculum resource teacher addressed this complication, eventually extending the reading block to accommodate time for writing instruction.

After the schedule was adjusted and while first implementing the new reading program, Mrs. Jones was still often unable to "get through" all the lessons with time left to teach writing. If the reading passages were short enough, writing was taught in the last

half hour of the reading block, from 9:20 until 9:50. However, if the reading passages were longer, Mrs. Jones was unable to teach writing. My observations from early in the school year indicate that Mrs. Jones's writing instruction lapsed almost completely for the first month of implementation of *Reading Mastery*.

Prior to teaching *Reading Mastery*, Mrs. Jones started reading class with language instruction, which in the beginning of the year were traditional Daily Oral Language (DOL) exercises. The students worked on two assigned sentences quietly for several minutes, then corrected the errors on the chalkboard with Mrs. Jones's support and direct instruction. When *Reading Mastery* started, this was removed from the curriculum, it was not replaced until February, after the FCAT Writing test was given. After the FCAT Writing test, Mrs. Jones taught language and vocabulary for the first twenty minutes of reading class, then taught a *Reading Mastery* lesson, and if time allowed, the students read a novel independently for the ending minutes of reading class. The shift in emphasis from writing to reading matched the testing cycle, for there is a month between the fourth grade writing test and the reading test.

From very early in the school year, Mrs. Jones's students learn and adapt to the classroom routine. Each morning, a morning message on the board greets the students and reminds them of what they need to accomplish before they begin social interactions with each other. One poster illustrates how Mrs. Jones helped the students learn the classroom routines. Posted on the chalkboard is "Today's schedule" on chart paper, and next to that is the morning letter:

Good morning awesome class,
Did you know that this
month is National Science
School Success Month?

You are in charge of
your school career.
Here's how you can
become successful:
Limit TV watching,
read a book instead
Do your homework
before play time
Listen more carefully to
instruction at school
Use your time wisely
Ask questions if you don't understand
#1 Check in
#2 Sharpen Pencils
#3 Do math on Board
#4 Study flashcards
#5 Free-Time

Eventually, as the class learns the routines, and the morning notes were less procedural and more academic. The daily message was replaced with a letter of encouragement that hung on the side of the chalkboard each day. The letter read, "Today is a good day to learn. I am going to have a good day because I'm a good student who can follow instructions and finish all my work."

The students are also greeted with a Math problem written on the chalkboard. These are often problem solving puzzles. For example:

Math

In how many ways can you add

8 odd numbers to get a sum of 20

you can use the numbers more than once

1 3 5

7 9 11 13

Each day the students complete the math assignment and then socialize, either by chatting, playing a game or working either together on various math puzzles.

At 8:00 on any given morning most of the students are already in the classroom, milling around and engaging in varying levels of interaction with each other and Mrs. Jones. Three boys are playing a board game on the floor; others are seated working on the morning board or checking their work into the appropriate boxes. Music is playing softly in the background, and there is a quiet hum of voices. Two other boys are chatting over their desks. Mrs. Jones is chatting and helping two girls complete their morning work. Mrs. Jones's interns, Ms. Noel and Ms. Whitfield are helping individuals, and other students are calling them for help by waving their hands or just asking lightly voiced questions.

Mrs. Jones moves to her desk on the side of the classroom to read student work papers, occasionally correcting student behavior by calling out a name of a student and identifying off-task behavior. This is calm, quiet, and almost private though it is done across the room. At 8:05, the school news begins. The principal, Mr. Dovish, begins complimenting the Accelerated Reader Point Club, which is followed by The Pledge and a patriotic song. The news is off, and Mrs. Jones turns off the television, and turns immediately to class: "Good Morning Boys and Girls. Who wants to read my chart? (pause) Only one person, ok, go ahead." The student reads, and Mrs. Jones clarifies the information and asks questions during this reading. Mrs. Jones continues, "Did anybody have any questions with the math?" At this time, there are a number of students who ask questions concerning the morning math. Mrs. Jones responds until there are no more questions, and at 8:10 the classes change for reading . During this transition, the students interact with each other on a social level. Mrs. Jones cues that the transition is over by walking to the center of the classroom and waiting quietly for all the students to attend.

Each reading class starts with the students reciting the rules. The acronym STAR is used to help the students remember the rules. The short sentences are listed on a poster that is eventually removed, but the recitation is never eliminated from the reading procedure. This morning, Mrs. Jones reminds the students to recite their behavior expectations, at which point the students respond in monotone:

I will sit up.

I will track with my finger.

I will answer on signal.

I will respect others.

At 8:15, the students are ready to begin reading and Mrs. Jones instructs them to open their reading books to Lesson 26, Part A, Vocabulary. Mrs. Jones begins, "Touch column 1." The class touches the first word in column one. "These words are *Andros Island.* What word?" *(Thud)* (Mrs. Jones is like Mrs. Phillips and uses a marker beat on the teacher's manual for the cuing signal.)

The students respond, *"Andros Island"* and Mrs. Jones says, "Spell Andros Island" and beats the pen for the students to begin voicing the letters: "a- n-d-r-o-s-i-s-l-a-n-d" and without skipping a beat, Mrs. Jones follows with "What word did you spell? *(Thud)"*

The students repeat, "Andros Island."

"Touch the next line, these words are *Bermuda Triangle.* What word? *(Thud)"*

The students respond "Bermuda Triangle."

Mrs. Jones says, "Class spell Bermuda Triangle. *(Thud)"*

The students spell, "b-e-r-m-u-d-a-t-r-i-a-n-g-l-e" and Mrs. Jones says, "What did you spell? *(Thud)"*

The students respond, "Bermuda Triangle," and Mrs. Jones says, "The next word is Florida. What word? *(Thud)"*

The students respond, "Florida."

"Spell Florida. *(Thud)"* says Mrs. Jones.

The students spell out the word, "f-l-o-r-i-d-a" and Mrs. Jones asks, "What did you spell? *(Thud)"* "Next word, Atlantic. What word? *(Thud)"*

"Atlantic." Respond the students.

"Spell Atlantic. *(Thud)"*

"a-t-l-a-n-t-i-c."

Mrs. Jones continues, "now let's see if you remember the words. Touch under the first line. What words? *(Thud)"*

The students read, "Andros Island" and Mrs. Jones continues, "Next words, what words? *(Thud)"*

The students quickly read "Bermuda Triangle" and so on through the list and Mrs. Jones directs the students to move to the second column. "Touch under the first word in column 2, everybody, what word? *(Thud)"*

The students read "Stormy" and Mrs. Jones says, "Next word, what word? *(Thud)"*

The students read "Thousand." Mrs. Jones continues, "Next word, what word? *(Thud)"*

The students read "harbor" and so on through twenty more words.

Now the students are on the column of vocabulary words and Mrs. Jones announces, "Everybody, touch column 6. First you are going to read the words in

column 6. Then we'll talk about what they mean. Touch under the words in line 1. What word? *(Thud)"*

The students answer, "Steady hum" and the class goes through each of the words in this manner. The words today are, steady hum, drain, rushed, and warning.

When the class has read each word on signal, Mrs. Jones goes back to the top of the column, and says, "Now let's talk about what these words mean. The words in line one are steady hum. A steady hum is one that keeps going without changing. Here's a steady hum: nnnnnnnnnnnn" (Mrs. Jones makes a humming noise that does not change tone). Mrs. Jones continues, "This is not a steady hum: NNNnnn" (Mrs. Jones makes her humming sound make changes) and then says to the class, "Now you try it, make a steady hum."

The class starts humming, and smiling, and Mrs. Jones lets them hum for a few seconds before she continues.

"The next vocabulary word is drain. The part of the sink that water goes down is called the drain. Everybody, what do we call the part of the sink that water goes down? *(Thud)"*

The students respond, "Drain." Mrs. Jones goes on, "the next word is rushed. When something is hurrying, it is rushing. Everybody, what's another way of saying 'He hurried though his breakfast?' *(Thud)"*

On cue, the students answer, "He rushed through his breakfast."

Mrs. Jones offered another example for this word, quickly asking the students, "What's another way of saying, 'She hurried out of the room?' *(Thud)"*

The students respond, "She rushed out of the room."

Mrs. Jones is on the last word in the column, "warning", and reminds the class that they have already learned that word. She calls on Tommy, who reminds the class that a warning is when the teacher lets you know you are doing something wrong. The class smiles, and Mrs. Jones continues with her lesson, telling the students that they will now review the words in the columns. At 8:27, she begins calling on various students to read the columns. As is her usual practice, the students sitting together at a table read a column, then a few students read aloud independently after the small groups have read all the columns.

At 8:34, the class is directed to move on to the reading section of the lesson. The actual reading takes less time than the question/answer sequences. In a 10-minute period, fourteen students read aloud taking turns that range from thirteen seconds to thirty-six seconds. Half of the 10 minutes is devoted to questioning.

It is 8:48. Mrs. Jones interrupts her teaching and reminds one of the boys to pay attention and be respectful.

The class continues reading, and at 8:55, they start reviewing the story's plot. To do this, Mrs. Jones asks the students, "Where did the children go on the ship?" and together they talk about the movement of characters in the story. Then Mrs. Jones directs the students to continue reading.

At 8:59, Mrs. Jones asks more questions related to the reading.

At exactly 9:00, the students close their reading books, while a few students pass out the reading workbooks, the other students get up and stretch. This stretching interlude occurs daily in Mrs. Jones's reading class. For five minutes, the students stretch, interact, use the rest room and get water if they desire. At the end of the break

period, Mrs. Jones blows a party horn, the students return to their seats, immediately settle and refocus. At this time, Mrs. Jones begins reviewing the questions and answers that the students will complete in their workbooks. This is all oral interaction, Mrs. Jones asks questions, the students answer. This question/answer review takes three minutes, and at 9:08, the students begin working independently in their workbooks.

I look back in the reading book while the students work at their seats. Today's reading lesson covers two pages that includes the vocabulary list, a map that covers approximately one-third of the first page, and an illustration of a ship that covers about one-fourth of the second page. It consists of sixteen paragraphs, a total of forty-two sentences. Within the text, there are thirteen comprehension task breaks that require a total of thirty-four responses from the students.

One of the two aides who regularly tests reading fluency, Mrs. Long, enters the room carrying a timer and a notebook. She takes Mrs. Jones's notebook off the shelf and immediately starts evaluating individual students at the back table, pulling one child after another. Within 2 seconds of being seated; the testing begins. Like Mrs. Foster in Mrs. Zeigler's classroom, Mrs. Long taps the first child, Shannon, on the shoulder to call her to the table for her fluency test. Shannon makes a "tsk" sound as she gets out of her seat and goes with Mrs. Long. After her test, Shannon taps Carol on the shoulder indicating it's her turn. I notice Carol as she approaches the testing table. Her body language is flat, showing no excitement or interest in this task. She has her hands at her sides, her shoulders are drooped, and her flip-flops are making sharp slapping sounds as she walks. As soon as she sits down at the testing table, she pulls the paper that has been set out in front of her close, and begins reading. The timer beeps, and Mrs. Longs says, "Go get

Amy." As Carol walks to get Amy, Mrs. Long resets the timer for one minute and repositions the reading passage for the next student. Amy sits down, watches Mrs. Long, and as soon as Mrs. Long taps the timer, Amy begins reading. The timer beeps; Mrs. Long says, "Go get Jonathan," and so the routine repeats itself until all the students have been tested. After the last student, Mrs. Long walks to Mrs. Jones, and a verbal exchange takes place that lasts 10 seconds. Mrs. Long returns the notebook to its shelf, walks back across the classroom, and exits.

At 9:16, two girls in the class have finished their workbooks and are ready to move on to writing. The class is working on an essay that responds to the prompt that requires them to explain what makes them special. As the students finish the *Reading Mastery* lesson, they begin working on their writing. They both walk back to the table in the back of the room where Ms. Noel, Ms. Whitfield and I are sitting, and ask us to help them with their writing. I often set aside my observations in this classroom and let students read their writing to me, but today I ask the girls to share with Ms. Noel and Ms. Whitfield instead, I continue observing the class. As more students complete their workbook assignment, they go to Mrs. Jones who hands them their writing notebooks, makes quiet comments to each student about their writing, and the students begin working on their essay. To do this, they either sit with a partner and work quietly, or they go to their desks and work independently. The choice is the student's--as long as they work, they may work together.

When one of the boys, Demitri, asks for his notebook, Mrs. Jones asks him to sit by her at her desk. Mrs. Jones takes a notebook from her desk, and she and Demitri begin looking at Demitri's essay together. I cannot hear their words from across the room, but

their faces are smiling, and Demitri occasionally erases something and then writes something. After a few minutes, Demitri returns to his seat and continues writing.

At 9:50, students start entering the side door from other classes, and the students working in Mrs. Jones's class pack up their work and exit. Reading is over.

CHAPTER 5
DISCONNECTED ENVIRONMENT

> Teaching is called a profession because the professional in that classroom has studied, experienced, and learned about the particular group of children. It is a profession because it is centered in the well-being and growth of its clients, the children. (Graves, 2001, p. 149)

Earlier in this research, opposing views of reading instruction were introduced to the reader. At that time, both commonalities and discrepancies between the theories were highlighted. *Reading Mastery's* philosophy was also outlined. *Reading Mastery* follows the skills approach, or functionalist theory, and is built on the foundation that we can *cause* learning to take place through adequate presentation and adequate practice of skills. According to *Reading Mastery*, "the teaching presentation is adequate if it provides a perfectly unambiguous communication to the learner" (Engelmann and Hanner, 1995, p. 1). Following this reasoning, it is important to note that *Reading Mastery* defines reading as a set of skills, and therefore, does claim to "teach" (through adequate presentation) reading:

> The skills developed in *Reading Mastery III [and IV]* are the ones that are considered to be central to future progress in reading – the ability to decode accurately, read at a reasonable rate, understand what is read, learn important relationships and facts through reading, retain information that is important, and find reading an enjoyable activity. (Engelmann and Hanner, 1995, p. 1)

This research questions both *Reading Mastery's* circular definition of teaching as well as its effectiveness in what it claims to do.

Two themes emerge across the cases that challenge *Reading Mastery's* viability as an instructional program: reading is treated as isolated assignments, and scripted teaching

results in depersonalized teaching and learning. A third theme is a result of the first two conditions: mandating *Reading Mastery* creates a deprofessionalized school community. Each of the themes is discussed in the context of the classroom environments presented in Chapter 4 and further supported by interview and field note data.

Drilling Exercises

Literacy is using oral and written language to communicate, and reading is the act of deriving meaning from text. Even at their most basic interpretations, it is difficult to claim that the conditions generally applied to literacy learning and reading are present in *Reading Mastery* classrooms. The analysis below shows no evidence of "communication" or "deriving meaning" from reading. Students engage in isolated assignments. Language is not produced, it is parroted.

Word Study

Reading Mastery structures lessons so that students first participate in word attack skills, which the program claims includes decoding and vocabulary building. However, as noted in the vignettes, *decoding* is little more than *spelling* out words. At no time during this research do the teachers teach letter-sound correspondences, spelling patterns, or other appropriate decoding skills during *Reading Mastery.* At no time do the teachers teach or reinforce vocabulary in context. All vocabulary instruction is simply word *presentation.* Teachers do not elicit prior understanding of the words, multiple meanings of words are ignored, and words are not presented in context. Students never apply the presented definitions.

Reading Mastery emphasizes fast paced instruction with no discussion. The lesson shared in Mrs. Jones's vignette is potentially a rich topic for students who live in Florida:

Mrs. Jones says, "The next word is Florida. What word? *(Thud)"*

The students respond, "Florida."

"Spell Florida. *(Thud)"* says Mrs. Jones.

Again the students spell out the word, "f-l-o-r-i-d-a" and Mrs. Jones asks, "What did you spell? *(Thud)"* "Next word, Atlantic. What word? *(Thud)"*

"Atlantic." Respond the students.

"Spell Atlantic. *(Thud)"*

"a-t-l-a-n-t-i-c."

Mrs. Jones continues, "now let's see if you remember the words. Touch under the first line. What words? *(Thud)"*

During this lesson, the students show no response that this is where they live. The teaching moves rapidly, neither the teacher nor the students make personal comments or connections to the topic. Throughout this lesson, no effort is made to contextualize the vocabulary, to relate the story's setting to known oceans or lands, or to elicit any connection the students may have to boating. The missed opportunity of connecting the students known experience to new learning is lost.

Vocabulary instruction is disconnected. Words are "presented" as opposed to "taught." Single definitions are presented to and repeated by the students as illustrated in Chapter 4:

"The next vocabulary word is drain. The part of the sink that water goes down is called the drain. Everybody, what do we call the part of the sink that water goes down? *(Thud)"*

The students respond, "Drain." Mrs. Jones goes on, "the next word is rushed. When something is hurrying, it is rushing. Everybody, what's another way of saying 'He hurried though his breakfast?' *(Thud)"*

According to Beck et al. (1997), "learning cannot happen simply by getting information from a source; understanding cannot be extracted from a text and put into a student's head, nor can it be delivered to a learner" (p. 9). Instead, the learner must actively

construct meaning. *Reading Mastery* does not require students to make meaning. They do not construct word definitions, share their own understanding of the words presented, or rephrase and use the words in their own natural language. Presenting word definitions that students repeat does not constitute vocabulary instruction. Real learning "involves being able to explain the information, connect it to previous knowledge, and use the information subsequently" (p. 10). *Reading Mastery* does not require this of the students, and therefore cannot claim to "teach" vocabulary.

Sporadic Reading

Reading that takes place in the *Reading Mastery* classrooms is oral reading. The program emphasizes oral reading to enable teachers to monitor the students' fluency, to keep the class on pace together, and to conduct recall of information checks. All reading is viewed as an opportunity to check fluency, and teachers stop readers and correct all mispronunciations. Students must read the exact words on the page, with no exception. In addition, reading turns are short. After each student's turn, the teacher questions the class or individual students asking any number of text related questions.

Treating reading as a series of sporadic episodes does not promote comprehension. "When struggling readers grow used to a steady stream of rapid, external interruptions, they begin to read with an anticipation of interruptions – word-by-word" (Allington, 2001, 74). Word-by-word reading has been found to limit students' reading rates and negatively impact comprehension (Allington, 2001). Furthermore, emphasizing word-perfect reading while reading aloud prevents students from viewing themselves as communicators of information (Vacca et al., 2003).

The data below indicate that some reading skills may be addressed, but engagement with a reasonable amount of connected text, or reading, is not part of the program. During several observations, the exact number of seconds each student read was timed, and number of readers who read aloud was counted, providing an average amount of time students read.

> **1/17:** 9 students read: 34,10,10,25,41,37,36,33,36: average, 29.1 seconds each student
>
> **2/25:** 8 students read: 21,42,20,16,12,44,19,25: average, 24.9 seconds each student
>
> **3/18:** 14 students read: 15, 16, 19, 36, 34, 20, 18, 30, 18, 17, 25, 13, 25, 14: average 21.4 seconds each student
>
> **5/13:** 6 students read, 5 were timed: 37, 24,58,46,30: average, 39 seconds each student

The timed turns indicate that students read anywhere from 10 seconds to 58 seconds per turn. After each turn, scripted questions direct the students to attend to specific details and are considered comprehension tasks. However, reading comprehension does not function on a sentence level. Sustained reading is an important component in any reading program, thus making it necessary to examine the overall length of time "reading" during the lessons. Data below offers a comparison of how much time is devoted to questioning and how much time is spent reading short segments of text within independent lessons:

> **1/17:** Main-story reading lasts 12 minutes. Total reading time: 4 minutes 37 seconds. The remaining 7 minutes, 23 seconds used to question [4T1 field notes, 1/17/03].
>
> **3/05:** S1 starts reading. 10 seconds into his turn, T tells S1 to reread the sentence using better emphasis. S1 does. The turn lasts 1 minute. S2 starts reading. In 20 seconds, S2 reads the whole paragraph and T talks for 4 of those 20 seconds [4T2 field notes, 3/05/02].
>
> **3/18:** Main-story reading lasts 10 minutes. A total of 5 minutes students are actually reading and 5 minutes questioning [4T1 field notes, 3/18/02].

> **5/13:** Main-story reading lasts 14 minutes. Five readers take a total of 195 seconds, but the first reader is not timed. If 60 seconds is added to the timed reading (no turns were timed throughout project to last more than 58 seconds) the total estimated time reading is 4 minutes, 25 seconds whereas questioning took 9 minutes, 35 seconds. [4T1 field notes, 5/13/02]

It is evident from the data that sustained reading is not present in *Reading Mastery*. This data, coupled with observable student disengagement and off task behavior, leads to questions concerning the students' academic productivity and therefore the appropriateness of the program. Students' lack of interest in and negative attitudes about reading are of concern. According to both the IRA and REA, reading requires "the development and maintenance of motivation to read." *Reading Mastery* takes responsibility for developing skills "considered central to future progress in reading" that include finding enjoyment in reading. Evidence of motivation and/or enjoyment should be apparent in the classroom and students should show excitement for and engagement in reading. There is no such evidence in *Reading Mastery* classrooms. Recalling the behavior portrayed in the vignettes serves as a reminder of how unmotivated the students are:

> By 8:07 in Mrs. Phillips's class, Will, who is frequently off-task, aggressive to other students and disrespectful, makes jokes about going home: "Yea! Is it time to go home yet?"
>
> Mrs. Zeigler again calls on a student to read who does not know where the class is and Mrs. Zeigler skips her just like she had the previous student. After the next reader, Mrs. Zeigler asks two more questions. Another student is called on to read, and he starts at the wrong sentence. Mrs. Zeigler calmly says, "Kerry, that is not where we are, Julie, will you please read."
>
> At 9:08 in Mr. Wright's class, the individual word reading is complete and the class is now reading columns of words. Sarah is lying back in her chair and leaning on the desk behind her. Daniel is disengaged; Mr. Wright calls on him to read, and since he doesn't know where the class was, Mr. Wright skips his chance to read aloud. Jasmine and Raymond are sitting on their feet. Precious is playing with her toes. Daniel just read a column of words with errors, and is now chatting with Latoya. Cortez and Raymond are talking with hand signals across the room. Lydia

> is playing with paper balls on the desk behind her. Mr. Wright continues to call on various students to read the columns of words. He asks Daniel to reread his column without errors and when he does, Mr. Wright tells him to record 2 points.
>
> Shannon makes a "tsk" sound as she gets out of her seat and goes with Mrs. Long. After her test, Shannon taps Carol on the shoulder indicating it's her turn. I notice Carol as she approaches the testing table. Her body language is flat, showing no excitement or interest in this task. She has her hands at her sides, her shoulders are drooped, and her flip-flops are making sharp slapping sounds as she walks. As soon as she sits down at the testing table, she pulls the paper that has been set out in front of her close, and begins reading. The timer beeps, and Mrs. Longs says, "Go get Amy." As Carol walks to get Amy, Mrs. Long resets the timer for one minute and repositions the reading passage for the next student. Amy sits down, watches Mrs. Long, and as soon as Mrs. Long taps the timer, Amy begins reading. Within 2 seconds of being seated; the testing begins. The timer beeps; Mrs. Long says, "Go get Jonathan," and so the routine repeats itself until all the students have been tested.

The classrooms at Shoals do not show students enjoying reading. Treating reading as a question/answer session does not allow students to become connected to the text. Reading is constantly interrupted. Constantly interrupting struggling readers contributes to reading difficulties rather than aiding in the reading process (Armbruster and Osborn, 2002; Vacca et al., 2003)

Checking Comprehension

It is questionable whether reading comprehension is taught in *Reading Mastery*. Returning to the definition of reading provided by both the IRA and REA, reading is a "complex system of deriving meaning from print." Deriving meaning, or comprehending, implies that readers themselves must make meaning, not just repeat words that are put before them in a text. Reading comprehension requires processing information, understanding the complexity of the possible interpretations of the words on the page. According to the program, students show their understanding of the reading by answering a series of short, scripted questions. However, how much this shows students' understanding is questionable for two reasons.

First, as noted above, all reading is oral until the students work in their workbooks. *Reading Mastery,* therefore, *may* allow students to improve their oral or listening comprehension. Engaging in listening does not necessarily develop read comprehension. Second, as reading researchers have determined, teacher questioning during the reading process can serve to restrict thinking or to expand thinking (Beck et al., 1997). *Reading Mastery* relies on what is considered traditional questions which ask students to retrieve information, not analyze or think about it. Traditional questions dictate the engagement students have with ideas in the text, drawing attention to the points the teachers find important, and dictate what the students attend to in the text, all of which restricts thinking. Beck and her colleagues also found lower levels of comprehension in question-driven environments:

> There were differences in the dynamics of the question-driven and query-driven discussions. Questions tend to promote teacher-to-student interactions with few opportunities for students to respond to one another or debate issues. As a result, question-driven lessons had a dull pace with little student engagement. The question-driven discussion was product oriented, and the product was what students remembered or what they could find in the text. (p. 33)

The teacher/student interactions in *Reading Mastery* are question driven. Students repeat answers found in the text, or even mindlessly respond in choral unison. Much attention has been given to developing comprehension strategies in students and the role of the teacher in helping develop these strategies (Allington, 2001; Calkins, 2001; Keene and Zimmerman, 1997; Pressley, 2002; Short et al., 1996). In all cases, the goal is for students to develop strategies that enable them to construct, interpret, and apply meaning of a variety of genres of text. Effective teaching includes active negotiation of meaning by the students, where questioning strategies engage the students in discussions that help shape their understanding of the text (Beck et al., 1997). These interactions are not part

of *Reading Mastery* as can be noted in the typical segment presented below [Field notes 4T1, Mar. 5, 2002]:

8:50

T: All right, everybody, let's get right to the story. Everybody, tell me, what's the error limit?

Ss: 8 errors

T: All right, S1, I'm going to let you start reading our reading.

S1: (reading) In the last lesson, you learned the main rule for training an animal to do a trick. Sometimes you reward the animal. Sometimes you don't reward the animal. The animal learns that the only way to get a reward is to do the trick. The animal wants the reward, so the animal does the trick.

T: I'm giving myself 4 checks because I found 4 people not tracking. Remember what skill I'm watching today.

T calls on second reader.

S2: (reading) Sometimes, the animal is not able to do the trick that you want it to do. Maybe you want the animal to jump up in the air and do a somersault before it lands on its feet. When you teach a hard trick, you don't follow the rule for teaching simple tricks.

T stops and asks class to reread the last sentence.

Ss: (reading) When you teach a hard trick, you don't follow the rule for teaching simple tricks.

T instructs reader to continue. It is 8:52.

S2: (reading) Here's why: The animal can't do the trick at first. So the animal will not receive any rewards for doing the trick. If the animal doesn't receive any rewards, the animal will stop trying to learn the trick.

T: Everybody, if the trick is hard, will the dog be able to do it at first? *(thud)*

Ss: No

T: So will the dog get a reward? *(thud)*

Ss: No

T calls on S3 to read. *This pattern continues for another few minutes.*

8:55

T: Stop right there. I'm getting a lot of points because a lot of people are not tracking. Remember that's one of the rules of this program. You have to track. Learning hard tricks for a dog is like learning how to ride a bike. If the trick is very hard, will the animal learn how to do it the first time? *(thud)*

Ss: No

T: So will he be rewarded? *(thud)*

Ss: Yes

T: No. You are not listening. Let me ask that question again. Will he be rewarded? *(thud)*

S: No.

This interaction illustrates the way comprehension is restricted to a series of yes/no or simple recall questions. Listening skills may be developed, but reading comprehension is not. Reading comprehension requires thoughtful interaction with the text and literacy learning requires student engagement (Cambourne, 1995). To be engaged in learning, students need to be responsible for deciding when, how and what they learn from each learning task. Those who lose the ability to make decisions in their learning are disempowered.

Reading Mastery does not engage students. The students do not initiate response to the reading, ask questions, or make personal connections. There are no student-to-student interactions, and all teacher-student interactions are scripted. There is only one sentence in the interaction above that can be considered a more natural elaboration of the content of the story (Learning hard tricks for a dog is like learning how to ride a bike). No comprehension strategies are explicitly taught, all questions are scripted and asked by the teacher, and there is no evidence of student learning.

Comprehension requires more than responding to scripted questions. Instruction should include a variety of explicitly taught strategies that enable students to become thoughtful readers. Reading research has identified six strategies that enhance comprehension for struggling readers (Allington, 2001). These include requiring the teacher to: demonstrate thinking strategies for students by using "think aloud" techniques; explicitly teach students to activate prior knowledge before reading; summarize; attend to story grammar; visualize various aspects of the text; and generate questions as they read. *Reading Mastery's* scripted questions do at times include predicting and sometimes provide a question/answer format of summarization of the text, however the lessons fail to provide modeling of this strategy. Predicting and summarizing are not explicitly taught as skills to become part of the reader's repertoire of reading behavior; instead they are part of the teacher's scripted routine. This is not sufficient. "The research on comprehension strategy teaching provides powerful evidence that most struggling readers (and many not so struggling readers) benefit enormously when we can construct lessons that help make the comprehension processes visible" (p. 98). Making the comprehension process visible to students requires them to become independent users of comprehension strategies (Pressley, 2002). Unless the *students* develop these skills they are not actively engaged in the reading process (Cambourne, 1995).

It is important to note that teaching in these conditions renders both teaching and learning mindless (Cambourne, 2002). Mr. Wright shows consciousness of the need to become mindless as he explains how he tries to balance the requirements of his job with his own belief in how literacy should be taught: "You just have to kind of go and if, if

you let yourself subconsciously decide what to do you don't have to really do any... you don't have to do any thinking" [4T2 Interview, May 2, 2002]. As noted throughout this research, the teachers all express that there is little "real" thinking required of the students. The ritualistic response pattern that the program fosters for student participation does not reveal evidence of thinking, only routine, patterned response often voiced in unenthusiastic, dull unison.

As shown in the vignettes, three teachers, Mrs. Phillips, Mrs. Zeigler's and Mrs. Jones make comprehension checks as the students' progress through the lesson. Mr. Wright's instruction differs in that he often saves the series of comprehension check questions for the end of the passage. However, once reviewing the questions, the rapid fire of scripted questioning is not dialogue. It is a disconnected series of questions (predominantly recall) that serve as a review of the passage which leads the students into the workbook checks. The ultimate goal of student ownership of comprehension strategy instruction goes unmet:

> Comprehension strategies are specific procedures that guide students to become aware of how well they are comprehending as they attempt to read and write. Explicit or formal instruction on these strategies is believed to lead to improvement in text understanding and information use. Instruction in comprehension strategies is carried out by a classroom teacher who demonstrates, models, or guides the reader on their acquisition and use. When these procedures have been acquired, the reader becomes independent of the teacher. Using them, the reader can effectively interact without assistance. Readers who are not taught these procedures are unlikely to learn, develop, or use them spontaneously. (NRP, p. 4-40)

Comprehension strategies are not demonstrated or modeled in *Reading Mastery*. There are no opportunities for students to personalize techniques or to become independent of the teacher.

In summary, analyzing the "teaching" of "reading" in the classrooms at Shoals in order to apply either of the definitions of reading provided by the IRA or the REA results in the conclusion that teaching reading is not present. *Reading Mastery* defines the adequacy of teaching as providing "perfectly unambiguous communication" to the students. "Perfectly" and "unambiguous" are relative terms where meaning, or value, is understood by the individual. One cannot prove perfection or ambiguity, therefore, whether *Reading Mastery* actually "teaches" is left up to individual interpretation. Even using the more limited description of "reading" as skill development that *Reading Mastery* outlines in its program introduction does not enable this researcher to claim viability of reading instruction. There is no evidence that students have an opportunity to read, at a reasonable or unreasonable rate, that they understand what they read, or that they understand relationships in reading. There is also little or no evidence that students enjoy reading.

Depersonalized Teaching and Learning

Teaching is an emotional business (Graves, 2001). In his research, Graves identify factors that both supply and drain teachers' energy to teach. Two main sources of positive energy for teachers are the relationships with their students and the collegiality they form with other teachers. Teachers form relationships with their students that provide excitement, joy and a sense of professionalism. The same is true with the relationship teachers form with their colleagues. When teachers are able to recognize the positive things they bring to their faculty they are able to form relationships with other professionals that fuel their own professional development. Learning is a powerful

source of energy that is multiplied through collaborative relationships and being part of a community of learners.

Emotionally Drained Teachers

It is not enough to just identify the impact of mandated programs on the instructional delivery and the classroom environments. Changes in pedagogy and the effect of the mandated literacy program on the classrooms have been well described in this study. However, it is imperative to note the emotional effect suffered by the teachers because they must teach this mandated literacy program. As Hargreaves (1998) notes, little research has been aimed at the analysis of reform effort on teachers' emotional health: "Emotions are virtually absent from the advocacy of and the mainstream literature specifically concerned with educational change and reform" (p. 837). This research, however, specifically inquires how teachers feel about mandated reform and the change required in their pedagogy and therefore does concern itself with emotions. Looking across the cases, a wide range of negative emotions is identified.

Teachers need to be in environments that sustain their emotional energy to teach (Graves, 2001). "What drains energy the most is when your professional options are reduced, or when decisions are made for you, and you can only react to events instead of shaping them" (Graves, 2001, p. 21). Teachers forced to teach a scripted curriculum are at risk for having their professional energy drained. Teachers in *Reading Mastery* classrooms do not make decisions. The program prescribes the academic focus for each group of students, and the content and sequence of the lessons are predetermined. It is the teacher's job to run through a script, which removes all personal connection to teaching and learning. Teachers are instructed not to deviate from the script and

therefore not to make personal connections during teaching. The questions teachers ask the students are guided by the program's presentation manual.

Revisiting the teachers' words and emphasizing the struggles these teachers endured provide the reader with explicit, powerful emotions. There are a total of 36 statements; Mrs. Phillips contributed fifteen; Mrs. Zeigler shared eleven; Mrs. Jones added two; and Mr. Wright made eight of the statements. Their words do not reflect a healthy teaching environment. The quotes are drawn directly from the interview data.

The teachers feel caught and unable to teach:

- You are caught
- I have not taught writing one-tenth of what I wanted to
- They are not getting it [comprehension instruction] anywhere
- A kid will be really stuck on something and you'll want to go to it knowing that you really can't

They are frustrated:

- You ought to be able to give everything you've got to those kids
- It's difficult and it's stressful
- It's nerve-racking
- It's very difficult to be torn between doing *Reading Mastery* and the FCAT… they're not one and the same
- Fourth grade is very opinionated…and we've gotten in a bit of trouble this year
- This year there was even more stress on timing
- Researcher asks, "How do you feel about this?" Teacher tears up and responds, "I have a Master's degree"
- Everything is chopped up
- It's really fragmented
- It's not useful

- …frustrating
- It's frustrating
- It's very frustrating

They feel programmed:

- Autonomy. I don't have any
- There are people telling us we have to do this and we have to do it this way
- We were just told this is how it's going to be
- The script is what is going to get the score up
- They were keeping track of how many Reading Mastery lessons you do every week
- I believe they felt we went too slow. Took too many breaks or whatever
- Time constraints on everything – it's kinda hard
- You're so constrained to this little box that you know, you just, you just kinda wonder, "Why?"
- I don't think the children see any of it in a real world realm
- I feel programmed like a computer

All these negative emotions lead to a loss of passion for teaching:

- I'm really discouraged. I'm sorry
- My motivation got less and less; it was a huge problem
- I'm at the point where, "Oh well"
- You know, it's not easy…you have to kinda let yourself go.
- *Reading Mastery* is not exactly my philosophy of instilling the love of reading in kids
- You do it anyway because you know you have to
- It has taken the fun out of teaching

The teachers' thoughtful participation in this project provided strong evidence that mandated reform has damaging effects on teachers' emotional well-being. As Brown

(1993) found in his research, "taking authority for curricular decisions away from local educators" leads to a distrusting, problematic environment. When teachers can no longer act upon their professional knowledge, being part of the decision-making process at their schools, they are left with a "perception of powerlessness." Brown's study documented the loss of control teachers feel when curricular decisions are mandated, as well as the barriers that exist that produce negative school environments:

> Of critical concern is the finding that local educators do not place much faith or trust in the decisions that are mandated from above and beyond local authority--specifically legislators without expertise in the field of education. The principle of educational mandates being determined that are devoid of educators' professional knowledge or consultation is without common sense. (p. 27-28)

The teachers in this research question the appropriateness of Reading Mastery regarding their students' academic development. Their concerns extend beyond the emotional needs of their students, for the teachers do not agree that the program adequately addresses the academic needs of the students.

Curriculum Driven by Test Scores

The teachers know that *Reading Mastery* was chosen to raise the reading test scores of their students. The state, the district administrators and the principal have emphasized test scores as a measure of teacher effectiveness and student achievement. The teachers, however, question the emphasis placed on *Reading Mastery* as a means to raise test scores. Their questioning coincides with Kohn's (1999) objections, which are "founded on the need for more context, more connections to real questions. The argument here is about how much time should be spent memorizing facts and practicing skills – and about whether these activities should be treated as ends in themselves rather than means for understanding the world" (p. 50). This concern is particularly relevant for Mr. Wright's students, as some are going through *Reading Mastery III* a second time. Mr. Wright

states that if *Reading Mastery* failed once, he would rather try something different as "not all students learn reading by repetition" and at times personalized instruction is necessary:

> I guess the philosophy of *Reading Mastery*, the program, is if it didn't work, you've got to keep doing it and doing it and doing it until it works. Well some things you don't learn by repetition. You know, like playing basketball--I can practice from now until the cows come home, I will never be as good as some people who are just natural at it. I think its the same thing with reading. I think, "If I don't learn this way I'm going to have to learn another way." Naturally, sure I might just be this phonetic genius who can learn this sound and learn that and know how to read everything. But then I might not be. I might be one person who needs to learn 10,000 sight words and I'll learn that way. It just depends on what I am as a person. And I think that we do a disservice sometimes when we assume that all kids learn the same way, which is something else that we've mentioned. But that is my philosophy. [4T2 Interview, May 2, 2002]

Mr. Wright is not able to personalize instructional or academic needs during *Reading Mastery* instruction. He is required to treat all students the same, and deliver the same instruction to all students, even if it does not meet the academic needs of his students.

The teachers do not think *Reading Mastery* effectively prepares their students for the FCAT, which has become a major focus for students in Florida. Mrs. Phillips admits to hurrying to cover curriculum before the FCAT is administered which is a growing trend across the state. "Experts in cognitive psychology overwhelmingly oppose--even crusade against--the tendency to march double-time through a set curriculum" (Kohn, 1999, p. 60). Their warnings go unheard in Florida, where several school districts have changed their school year to begin earlier in August so that the students have a few more weeks of school before the FCAT is administered. The teachers feel the pressure created by the test, and they struggle to prepare their students. Mrs. Phillips feels this responsibility and recognizes that *Reading Mastery* does not provide opportunities for

extensive comprehension development. The questions are all "factual, there's no inference or higher order questions." To better prepare her students, she enlists the help of district curriculum support personnel:

> So we tried to get some questions about the stories in *Reading Mastery* that are FCAT questions, you know, more open-ended with long response type questions. But many of those really aren't higher order thinking. They're just long response. They're not multiple choice. And we have those questions that someone developed and printed them up and we have them now. [3T2 interview, Mar. 5, 2002]

Even though the questions Mrs. Phillips refers to above prove to be unsatisfactory because they really are not developing comprehension strategies, Mrs. Phillips uses them because district supervisors provide them as appropriate FCAT preparatory materials.

Similar concerns over the FCAT and how appropriate *Reading Mastery* is in preparation of students for the test present a concern for Mrs. Jones. Being part of the fourth grade team who had been ordered to maintain a positive attitude towards *Reading Mastery*, Mrs. Jones rarely voices her opinion. However, when she does share her thoughts, she shares worries about the FCAT test, noting that *Reading Mastery* will not prepare her students for the test. Because of this concern, she promotes independent reading, and allows students to read as soon as they complete their workbook assignments. She expresses this concern when discussing the rate and accuracy checks that are conducted weekly:

> I really don't know. I know they need to read fluently but how is that going to help them on the FCAT where they have to read long passages? The fluency tests are short passages. They are reading short passages in the reading lessons and the interruptions do not require the students to focus for long periods of time. [Field notes, Feb. 2, 2002]

The "interrupts" that Mrs. Jones refers to are the comprehension check questions in the script. As noted earlier, Mrs. Jones's students do not engage in sustained reading in the classroom. She recognizes this and it concerns her, as it does Mr. Wright:

> You know because it's becoming more and more important and it's very difficult to be torn between like for example we were, like when they were talking about doing *Reading Mastery* and we have to do the FCAT and we have to do all this. We were just thinking they don't match. We have to be testing the kids on, on the FCAT and we have to do this too. They are not one and the same. *Reading Mastery* which is very basic, limited, you know, right there kind of questions and the FCAT is so much more beyond that. And they just aren't going to get this from here you know and so it was more of a nerve-racking thing. Like this is all I can do? How am I supposed to get to teach them this? [4T2 interview, May 2, 2002]

In all cases, the teachers in the research express the need to move away from single, fact based answers toward more thought-provoking learning activities. *Reading Mastery* is a basic skills program that emphasizes questioning details in the text, where there is one right answer. Basic skills training does not promote thinking:

> We've been conditioned to accept as an obvious truth--rather than one particular model of schooling--the idea that learning is a process of getting things right, and thus "good" students get more right than the "bad " ones. A child produces the right answer and everyone is happy; on to the next problem, the next topic, the next grade....[But] if we want kids to be thinkers, we have to encourage (and help) them to think--and that means spending most of their time in most subject areas on questions that don't lend themselves to single-word answers that are either right or wrong. (Kohn, 1999, p. 57)

Helping students become thinkers takes much more than basic skill instruction. Teachers help develop thinking in students when they engage in discussions with their students. They help students develop thinking by engaging students in meaningful, purposeful work that require reflection, application, reasoning, and questions that extend the students' thinking.

> To answer these questions well, kids need to have some facts and skills. But the facts and skills are acquired in the context of meaningful, engaging questions. They are not acquired purely for the purpose of coughing up the right answers to dull, testlike questions. (p. 57)

Students need practice with multiple ways of responding to a given text, for we "can read and interpret texts in various ways" (Bruner, 1986, p. 5). According to Bruner, teachers who negotiate meaning and express "a stance of uncertainty or doubt" help

students learn to think. Students become negotiators of knowledge, and "agents of knowledge making as well as the recipients of knowledge transmission" (p. 127).

Reading Mastery is based on the premise that students must learn basic skills before comprehension or meaning become important. The object of the lessons is for the students to repeat information presented to them so that at some later date they can use the information. This type of curriculum moves students from one isolated assignment to the next. Students are not engaged in meaningful activities and the program does not adequately meet the academic needs of the students.

Students' Individual Needs Go Unmet

Students in *Reading Mastery* classrooms are not seen or treated as individuals. Every student is run through the same script in a "one size fits all" model that overemphasizes skill instruction (Ohanian, 1999). Imposing scripted instruction on low-performing students "dumbs down" the curriculum and defines literacy learning as a problem. According to Gutierrez and her colleagues (2001), "requiring educational approaches that separate learning from its context and the individual from the resources of her diverse community of peers" is an extreme measure that prevents students from constructing literacy knowledge together (p. 160). When no attention is given to students' strengths or weaknesses, to their cultural identities, or to their prior knowledge, they are devalued and become insignificant factors in the educational process.

Scripted teaching prevents teachers from attending to their students as individuals. Mrs. Phillips shares her frustration over this restriction, explaining how she is unable to meet the needs of her students. Joey, one of her students, is a catalyst for much of the

distractive behavior that occurs in the class. Some days, Joey is in constant motion, while on other days, he is completely withdrawn from the activity in the classroom:

> Today I had three that didn't lift a finger. They're emotionally handicapped, who knows what the problem is, you know? With [Joey], he just didn't feel good today, so he didn't do a single thing. I was back here over and over and over again, but there I was, I wasn't going to get anything out of him. [3T2 interview, Mar. 5, 2002]

Mrs. Phillip can do little to help Joey. The program monitors the pace she delivers her reading instruction leaving her no option, she most go forward at a rapid pace, regardless of how her students are responding to the instruction. This distresses Mrs. Phillips and her students.

The teachers recognize the emotional needs of their students that go unmet while teaching *Reading Mastery*. Mr. Wright's reading class is the smallest group because of the students' serious emotional and academic demands. The eleven students in the class are all special education students, and they are all performing at least one year below grade level. Mr. Wright shares that his students have a multitude of emotional needs, with very difficult home life situations. They often find it hard to stay in their seats and concentrate during reading. Mr. Wright tries to provide opportunities for the students to experience some flexibility in the classroom at times he is not restrained by the script. However the times that Mr. Wright allows freedom to move around are inconsistent with *Reading Mastery* behavior modification techniques where Mr. Wright continuously rewards and punishes students based on a point system. The message is conflicting, for on the one hand Mr. Wright knows and is able to express that his students emotional needs require flexibility, yet *Reading Mastery's* behavioral point system depersonalizes

all behavior, requiring strict compliance from all students regardless of their emotional needs.

Mr. Wright's mixed messages are illustrated in the vignette in Chapter 4 in the way that Mr. Wright deals with Raymond, one of the off-task students. Mr. Wright's classroom had air-conditioning problems often causing the room to be very cold. Raymond is a boy of slight stature, and he was having trouble paying attention because he was cold. Eventually, Mr. Wright loans him his sweatshirt, and Raymond attends to his work, but only after he had already missed his chance to read and lost points for "not attending to instruction." Clearly, Mr. Wright has compassion for his students or he would not loan them his own clothes. After this observation I asked Mr. Wright what was wrong with Raymond as he was more off-task than usual. Mr. Wright disclosed that he was going through a particularly difficult time at home. The depersonalized structure of the reward system set by *Reading Mastery* does not allow Mr. Wright any flexibility in how he meets Raymond's needs.

Personal, connected response has no place in *Reading Mastery*. Reconsider the scene shared in Mrs. Zeigler's classroom vignette in Chapter 4. The interaction takes place while reading a passage titled, "Linda and Kathy Escape from the Sinking Ship" (student text, p. 284-287). The boat was on fire, and the captain was directing everyone to get into lifeboats. Kathy and Linda were children, traveling alone from the United States to Japan to visit their father.

John: (reading) People were running this way and that way on the deck of the ship. They were yelling and crying.

Mrs. Z: Class, how do you think they felt? *(click)*

S1: Sad

Mrs. Z: Sad (monotone). If you were in a boat that was on fire, how would you feel? *(click)*

S2: Frightened!

Mrs. Z: Yes, that's a good word. (Calls on another S to continue reading)

Though the passage presents a sinking ship in chaos, two children alone without family in "the middle of the Pacific Ocean," Mrs. Zeigler does not accept the response "sad," instead she elicits an answer more closely matched with the program's suggestion of "scared." Why did this student qualify her feelings as sad, did she connect sadness to being alone on a journey, or was sadness her response because people were crying and yelling? Mrs. Zeigler does not ask the student "Why." Instead, she indicates "sad" is not an acceptable answer by restating the question. According to Gutierrez, Baquedano-Lopez and Turner (2001), language learning is a process of socialization in which the child and adult are active agents" (p. 158). In *Reading Mastery*, neither the child (student) nor the adult (teacher) is an active agent. The students are trained to respond on cue, often knowing that there is one right answer that is found in the book, not in their understanding of the text and the teachers accept only the answers provided by the scripted presentation manual.

Bruner (1986) posits that "language necessarily imposes a perspective in which things are viewed and a stance toward what we view" (p. 121). Teachers who are forced to utter the language of instruction prepared by those outside her classroom are forced to impose the program's worldview. In *Reading Mastery*, teachers are forced to deliver the world view to their students that they are not knowers, their experience is not relevant to their learning, and that they are unimportant in the process of learning.

Summary

Mandates imposed on the literacy program at Shoals result in a disconnected learning environment and depersonalized teaching and learning. Language is not used as a tool for making meaning. Reading instruction is compromised. Students do not engage in book or story discussions. They show very little positive emotions or personal connections to reading. What the students know is not taken into consideration in daily lessons. No prior knowledge is activated. No personal knowledge is shared. Lessons are treated as units that do not connect in any way to the students' lives, their prior learning, or their future learning. The focus of learning is on the immediate products: recitation of words, independent answers to comprehension tasks, and workbook pages completed independently. The absence of meaningful context for literacy learning renders the students out of control in both their learning and their behavior. This requires the teachers to force control over the students, constantly reminding them of procedures and rules, using external measures of control to contain the students' behavior. The students take no responsibility for their own learning. They exhibit no outward signs of enjoying reading. Mandating a scripted curriculum results in a deprofessionalized school community. Teachers are rendered powerless over classroom curriculum, thus interfering with their ability to meet both the academic and social needs of their students. Knowing that they cannot teach what and how they feel best, they too, are at emotional risk.

If one supports sociocultural theory and the interconnectedness of language, culture and learning, or in the transactional view of reading which posits that there may be multiple meanings, understandings or layers of interpretation of a text, then literacy teaching and learning are not present in the classrooms during *Reading Mastery*.

CHAPTER 6
LOSS OF CONTROL

> We struggle with the current misfit between our identities as professionals and the ways in which we find ourselves being defined by legislators, the press, and policymakers. The increasing pressure to conform robs us of our energy and creativity and the ability to make decisions as teachers. (Short. K. et al., 2002, p. 287)

Replacing local educational decision-making with mandates controlled by legislative measures has negatively affected Shoals Elementary School. This chapter outlines how these recent mandates manipulate instructional decisions. Pressure is on everyone to continually improve reading test scores by imposing punitive measures on schools, teachers and students. In order to understand the full impact of the political interference, it is necessary to understand the context of the school and the environment in which administrative decisions are made. Mr. Dovish's perspective as the principal of the school is critical. This chapter positions the principal, details the school's literacy instruction history as perceived by the administration, and offers a rationale for the selected program, *Reading Mastery*. The chapter then moves to the teachers' literacy beliefs and their reactions to *Reading Mastery*. It concludes with an analysis of how the experience impacts each of the teachers' ideologies.

Decisions Under Pressure

Literacy Development

Mr. Dovish is a professional educator as well as an administrator. He holds a bachelor's degree in Secondary English, a master's degree in Elementary Education, and a specialist degree in Educational Leadership. He has been principal of Shoals for ten

years, following twenty years of teaching experience at the elementary, middle and high school levels and eight years experience in the district office acting as supervisor of special education, elementary curriculum, and parent services.

Mr. Dovish's leadership style is that of collaborative decision-making. In general, Mr. Dovish tries very hard to respect and honor his faculty, as he holds them in high esteem:

> I try to hire talented people who inspire me. I like them and respect them and then I don't have to micromanage. I work on building relationships and providing meaningful curriculum. I don't stand over them and tell them what to do. I don't like to be micromanaged and I don't like to do that. I give as much autonomy with the range of the things that we do have to accomplish, and I try to provide the latitude to do what the teachers feel they need to do. [P interview, Jan. 2003]

Mr. Dovish has reportedly always been a collaborative administrator, with the exception of mandating reading curriculum for the 2001-2002 school year. The teachers in the school as well as the school's environment confirm as much. His decision to mandate literacy instruction is out-of-character; it left his faculty in a state of confusion. Even Mrs. Laurent, the CRT who works under the direct supervision of the principal and acts as a liaison between the administration and the teachers, did not understand his motivation. Mrs. Laurent reports that neither she nor the faculty understood the change in Mr. Dovish's leadership or why curriculum decisions were taken out of the hands of the teachers the year this research was conducted:

> I'm not quite sure what happened this past year that made [Mr. Dovish] decide we're all going to do it other than we still didn't show a huge amount of growth. And so I guess he thought that everybody needed direct instruction. So that's the reason we're doing that. [CRT interview, May 5, 2002]

Not only is his decision to mandate *Reading Mastery* out-of-character, Mr. Dovish's support of the program is somewhat contradictory to his own beliefs about how literacy develops in children. Mr. Dovish defines literacy as "the use of language, spoken

written, and having something to say--shared ideas. Literacy connotes to me not just the machinery of communication but also what is communicated and having a sense of expanding experiences and expanding ideas, increasing vocabulary, and also an interest in that" [P interview, May 18, 2002].

Mr. Dovish states that a child's home language plays a major role in his/her literacy learning at school. Children learn language as a result of using language to communicate, and that communication evolves into an understanding of words and of phrases as groups of words. Once a child has this understanding, later an awareness that words are made up of sounds and letters that represent those sounds (phonetic understanding) develops.

Mr. Dovish separates the use of "language to communicate" from "the mechanical level of language, or reading." Language to communicate is language that is used in everyday life and includes both spoken and written forms. Reading is explained as a decoding process where children learn to match the symbols of a word to the object, thought or idea the word represents. Mr. Dovish believes that in order for the students to be able to make this match, they must have some experience to attach meaning to the sounds and letters they are learning:

> I think if they're just isolated things then the decoding process, you know, I think it can work but it doesn't have a whole lot of meaning and there's no comprehension there. And I think that that's what hurts a lot of our kids, that they're kind of experience-deprived and language-deprived and they're not exposed to the kind of language and the kind of vocabulary and the kind of things and ideas and experiences from birth until school and preschool. So even if they learn a lot of the mechanics of stuff, it just doesn't mean a whole lot to them and they don't have a sense of the language syntax. [P interview, May 18, 2002]

One of the keys to literacy development is active communication. Mr. Dovish states that literacy develops from first using language to communicate. That both spoken and written language are best learned when used in meaningful interactions. Mr. Dovish

further points out that literacy development is enhanced when a child is "actually engaged in communicating back and forth with an adult about anything... So, I think that interaction seems to be an important part. You know, there has to be engagement, I think, in the process and talking about stuff" [P interview, May 18, 2002].

Mr. Dovish's belief that engagement should be present during instruction is supported by Cambourne's (1995) research that identifies the conditions necessary for learning. According to Cambourne, immersion, demonstration, engagement, expectations, responsibility, approximation, employment and response need to co-exist as "indispensable circumstances" necessary for language development. These conditions support and enable literacy learning, with engagement emerging as the key. "It didn't matter how much immersion in text and language we provided; it didn't matter how riveting, compelling, exciting, or motivating our demonstrations were; if students didn't engage with language, no learning took place" (p. 186).

Struggling Readers

Mr. Dovish explains that he believes it is possible that the rich language environment of the school is often just not understood by some of the students. He believes that we often assume that our students have an understanding of some common words like the word "table" but if children do not have tables at home they may have to learn the meaning of "table" at school. He states "that one of the problems we have with emerging literacy in kids is assuming that they have an understanding of words and sounds and letters and all a lot more than they do." To help these students move beyond the sounds and letters of what the students actually understand, we have to "get through the mechanics of breaking the code and attaching meaning to it" so that they get a better

sense of the language. Mr. Dovish explains that the kids struggling are having a hard time attaching meaning to their learning. "If we can teach them to break the code, that stuff has to have some meaning" [P interview, May 18, 2002]. This is the point that contradicts his earlier statements--with struggling learners Mr. Dovish contends we must focus on breaking the code in order to get to the meaning instead of starting with meaning to break the code. He notes that limited interaction in conversations with adults in the home and the passive interaction that many children have at home with television has not done much to help impoverished kids develop literacy. Mr. Dovish slips into the deficit theory regarding "impoverished kids." The deficit theory frames school failure as defective students, placing the problem within the student, and therefore justifies specialized placement or curriculum to explicitly address the students' failures (Skrtic, 1991). Mr. Dovish's statement indicates that he believes struggling readers suffer from a disabling learning condition due to a lack of interaction with language. He feels that this can be corrected by implementing a specific program.

In order to act on these beliefs to improve reading performance scores for struggling readers, Mr. Dovish has made changes in recent school years:

> We've done a lot of things, especially in the last couple years for our struggling readers to get beyond the typical remedial reading thing. You know, move them back a level or something and we've gone back and done a lot of diagnostic language evaluation and put in a couple different language development programs… in particular to try to provide some structured language development to fill in those gaps with our third graders. [P interview, May 18, 2002]

Programs that Mr. Dovish mentions specifically are the Wilson Program, the LIPS program, CRISS strategies for comprehension, and the Accelerated Reader Program (Renaissance Learning). CRISS (**CR**eating **I**ndependence through **S**tudent owned **S**trategies) (Santa,1996) is a collection of strategies teachers use depending on how they

feel their students will benefit to enhance comprehension. The teachers at Shoals had all been part of the CRISS training, and in the years prior to this research project, individual teachers selected the specific strategies they implemented in their classrooms. Wilson is a code emphasis reading program. It was delivered to a group of students who were significantly behind in reading skills, specifically, phonemic awareness and phonics, by the speech teacher. The school's 3rd grade Exceptional Student Education (ESE) teacher also used it in the past, but was not using it during the year this study was conducted. The LIPS program (Listen, Initiate, Produce and Solve) is another code emphasis program that the speech teacher used for some kindergarten and first grade students in past years. Accelerated Reading (AR) is a school-wide incentive-based program that encourages students to read independently. The last half hour of every school day is reserved for AR reading, when students either read independently from pre-selected books at their tested reading level in their classrooms or take computerized reading tests on books they have finished reading. The tests award students points that are based on the level of reading difficulty of the book as well as the number of correct answers given on the test.

Mr. Dovish measures student progress to make decisions regarding instruction. He does not necessarily fit the 'pro-phonics' label for all his students, however, he does for his struggling readers. "The camp usually designated as 'pro-phonics' believes in teaching sound-symbol relationships mostly, if not exclusively, through direct instruction, in a way that is intensive and explicit, by means of a very specific sequence of lessons" (Kohn, 1999, p. 160). In spite of the fact that Mr. Dovish states that students need to have "a sense of expanding experiences and expanding ideas, increasing vocabulary, and

also an interest in that," he mandates *Reading Mastery*, a highly skill-based, decontextualized program. As noted in Chapter 5, *Reading Mastery* classrooms at Shoals do not reveal the presence of a high level of student interest or engagement (Cambourne, 1995). All context and meaningful interactions with the words or content of reading texts are removed, thus contradicting what Mr. Dovish states is an important component for literacy development.

Placing struggling readers who need rich language experiences in *Reading Mastery* is contradictory to what Mr. Dovish and many educators say they need. Mr. Dovish makes his decision based on his belief that *Reading Mastery* is just a *part* of the whole reading program:

> It works with what it attempts to do. Is it a whole reading program? Well, no. We've got all the literature, and I think that's where a lot of debate is when people say well, you know, it's sounding out words and it's all that and they don't get the whole literacy thing. Well, no. I mean some people will tell you it does but even my wife who is a consultant and a trainer for it, you know, in her class, which is set up very much for Direct Instruction, you know that they do that. But that's like forty minutes a day but a good deal of the time is structured reading, and the comprehension, the integrated teaching, and you know, just all of that stuff has some meaning. Especially with a lot of those language deficit kids you know, just the decoding all by itself without being able to attach that to something is just going through the motions. [P interview, May 18, 2002]

However, for the students in *Reading Mastery* classrooms at Shoals, *Reading Mastery* is their whole instructional reading program. As noted earlier, the program requires eighty minutes of instruction daily. Shoal's reading block of 100 minutes is a combined reading/language arts block, all language arts instruction must be included during those 100 minutes. In reality, this leaves no time for additional reading instruction. Therefore, *Reading Mastery* is the complete reading instructional program for the most struggling readers at Shoals, even though Mr. Dovish understands it to be only part of their program.

Struggling students are the students most often placed in repetitive, explicit skill instruction (Allington, 2002; Coles, 2002; Fu and Lamme, 2002; Garan, 2002; Kohn, 1999). Politicians, in their cries to improve education and to hold educators accountable for student learning, promote these "proven programs" which has impacted Mr. Dovish's district administrators. Shoal's district has adopted *Reading Mastery* as the program most suitable for special education students and readers who do not score above level one on the FCAT. The spotlight across the state is on the lower quartile readers, with growing concerns regarding continued legislative interference in site-based educational decision-making. Mr. Dovish is trying to help his school at the same time that he is part of this system. It is not surprising then, that in spite of his personal belief that language learning needs to be connected to meaningful communicative interactions, Mr. Dovish takes desperate measures to try to improve the test scores of struggling readers. He explains why he made the decision to mandate *Reading Mastery*:

> Because I thought that we weren't making progress with a group of students that Direct Instruction seems to be necessary for and what happened although our kind of middle and high students were gradually showing increases, we weren't seeing that kind of growth with that kind of lower quartile kids, and actual gains that they were making. And I, we kind of played with it the year before and we have, had seen some success with it…and actually we had a lot of success with it in third grade where we got a lot of kids just dealing with that mechanical aspect of the decoding, and that business. [P interview, May 18, 2002]

What Mr. Dovish calls "playing around with it" with his faculty was the collaborative style of leadership until this school year. The reading curriculum committee routinely monitored progress of students together with Mr. Dovish and Mrs. Laurent, the CRT. The administration and the faculty worked together through the reading committee to make decisions regarding instructional methods and materials. Changes in the school were not mandated, instead they were collaboratively decided and based on teacher input,

student performance, and administrative guidance. This kind of collaborative leadership recognizes that

> Change does not come from fiats, whether external or internal. It doesn't have anything to do with long blocks or short blocks, cooperative learning or direct instruction. It has to do with how an individual teacher feels about his or her work and how the school perceives that teacher. (Cohen, 2002, p. 533)

Curriculum decisions made in collaboration with teachers, including implementation of *Reading Mastery*, created lasting, positive effects on the school. Prior to the 2001-2002 school year, Shoals implemented two programs that are compatible with each other, CRISS and the Pegasus Reading Program (Harcourt), that teachers supported. CRISS was brought in to the school in Mr. Dovish's early years as principal and staff development was made available to the whole faculty. The Pegasus program was chosen by the teachers "because it had all the CRISS strategies embedded in it" [CRT interview, May 5, 2002]. According to Mrs. Laurent, implementing these two programs increased the students' achievement ratings from the thirtieth to the fiftieth percentile:

> When [Mr. Dovish] first came here our achievement ratings were probably in the thirtieth percentile, somewhere in there. And every year we were bringing them up. And then it got to the point where once we got up around the fiftieth percentile, we kinda stopped improving. And so, we tried to figure out what it is we were doing or not doing--why we weren't moving beyond that. And so we started looking into Direct Instruction models and things like that. [CRT interview, May 5, 2002]

The faculty decided to implement *Reading Mastery* in some of the third grade classrooms to try to counteract the stagnating progress of struggling readers. Students reading below level were placed in either *Corrective Reading* or *Reading Mastery*. According to Mrs. Laurent, incoming students were tested and placed in a program that met their needs:

> We would take our below grade levels and if they're really severe ones, we put them in the first level. The kids that knew the sounds but were having problems decoding things and then comprehension, we put into the next level. And they

> would do both levels of Corrective and they came out above grade level at the end of the year, so it worked very well. [CRT interview, May 5, 2002]

As a result, some struggling third grade students "did really well with Direct Instruction and so then we expanded it to some of the fourth graders." This expansion started as the teacher's option; if the teacher decided that the *Reading Mastery* program was an appropriate instructional method for the class, he or she could choose to implement it.

Since progress was evident from these collaborative decisions, Mr. Dovish wanted to implement Direct Instruction on a wider scale. He appealed to his teachers, when more teachers did not agree to strictly implement *Reading Mastery*, Mr. Dovish mandated it without their consent.

State Mandates Increase

Mr. Dovish understands that his teachers do not want to teach *Reading Mastery*, because it is "highly prescriptive and doesn't allow any flexibility." He notes that "it's very tightly controlled" and "even the people who are very good at it don't find it intrinsically rewarding." He understands how teachers using the program feel because his "wife who is a trainer in it and a believer in it, you know, she looks at it as a good thing that we have to do that's good for kids, and you know, 'it's not much fun for me because it's dry and it's routine.'" Mr. Dovish believes that his teachers feel similarly, that, "it's okay, but you know, I don't want to do it" [P interview, May 18, 2002]. Even though his teachers resisted, he decided that his struggling readers needed the program, and mandated its implementation. "When you are training kids for automaticity, which is the essential ingredient in fluency, which is the essential ingredient to comprehension" [P interview, May 18, 2002] kids need that kind of instruction. The use of the term

"training" is a departure from "teaching" in the more engaging context Mr. Dovish earlier describes as necessary for language development.

Mr. Dovish's anxiety about third grade test scores is intensified by the state's newest mandate requiring grade retention for third graders who do not pass the FCAT Reading test. Mr. Dovish completely disagrees with this mandate:

> Well I have a problem with the legislature deciding those things because it's like a bunch of monkeys at typewriters… I don't think that's their role. They are micromanaging the educational system in a kind of random fashion. And they don't know what they're doing. They do things that are you know counterproductive. They do things that are conflicting; they're contradictory. It's just that any time a simplistic solution is offered to solve a complex problem, it is usually not going to be very effective. And they tend to define problems in ways that can fit on bumper stickers, *social promotion* and *higher standards* and all these kinds of things. They really don't understand what they're really talking about nor do they want to. And they don't understand nor do they want to understand the implications of all of these decisions. Some of which you know end up being okay and some of which end up being really stupid. And the new one is this whole retention thing which now they're saying that any third grader who's in level one will be retained and we're going to fire principals if they don't. We're going to fire superintendents if [they don't force the principals to retain the level one students] you know, just all that kind of stuff. There's a lot of very strong and, and confrontational and really stupid language in the law. You know I have some fairly strong feelings about retention because I think that it generally doesn't work, or doesn't do what people think it does. But it's a very simplistic way of dealing with a symptom of something that's a much more complex problem than they want to get involved with. And it's a good way to keep blaming educators, teachers, principals, whoever for just not fixing the problem because "we don't have high standards…we socially promote kids." There's considerable research that suggests that retention generally doesn't work. [P interview, May 18, 2002]

Mr. Dovish knows that regardless of his professional knowledge regarding retention, and his teachers' professional judgment regarding individual students retention needs, the new mandate will require him to fail students based on their FCAT score. This mandate moves local control away from the school, rendering Mr. Dovish powerless to act on his professional knowledge. In response, Mr. Dovish reacts in ways that contradict

his established leadership style, resulting in an increasingly negative environment at the school as documented in other research (Brown, 1993; Williamson and Churchill, 1996).

Resistance from his faculty set off a chain reaction of negativity. The two grade levels in this research reacted differently, but both reacted negatively. The fourth grade team was vocal in their response, openly showing resistance. The teachers were not willing to abandon the reading program they had been using, or to teach a scripted program that limited literature use in the classroom. Mrs. Laurent, the CRT, described the negative atmosphere that developed:

> There was a big thing going on and some fourth grade, one particular teacher, was you know trying to sabotage the whole *Reading Mastery* thing. And, and the background on some of this is over one summer [Mr. Dovish] decided we are doing *Reading Mastery*. We didn't go through any of the normal let's look at it, let's study it, let's talk about it stuff. It was just we are doing it. [Mrs. Laurent], get it done, kind of a thing. And teachers didn't know where they, where he was coming from. Had they done something wrong? Were they being punished? Whatever. So there was one particular teacher that was you know was trying to submarine the whole thing and we had a *Reading Mastery* consultant come in and do a big in-service and fourth grade, some of the teachers just turned their backs to the consultant. And wouldn't even make eye contact with them.... Other ones would just... this was like rude... [Mrs. Jones] didn't participate in all the shenanigans... When it was over [Mr. Dovish] went in to fourth grade and reamed that team out about how they had, how unprofessional that was, how they had embarrassed him and everything. By the next morning every teacher on the team with the exception of one had come to him and apologized. [Mrs. Jones] didn't because I don't think [Mrs. Jones] was included in the reaming. But um they all came to him and they said I'm sorry we were sucked into this scheme to submarine the whole *Reading Mastery.* [CRT interview, May 10, 2002]

Mr. Dovish's decision created a combative climate that included outright hostility. His response to the teachers after the incident caused many of them to hide their disgruntled feelings, but it did not produce a positive environment. The teachers resented the imposed curriculum. Williamson and Churchill (1996) found that teachers experience a "lack of perceived ownership" in imposed curriculum which results in their deskilling.

"It seems that changes that originate outside these teachers' work settings and which are presented as mandatory are seen by them as most problematic" (p. 4).

Furthermore, Mrs. Laurent was not pleased with how the decision impacted her job. Relationships throughout the school broke down:

> All of a sudden we have this decision. The whole school is doing *Reading Mastery*. We're going to come into your room weekly and do these readings and writing accuracy checks and all the checking your logs to see what you taught and didn't teach. So overnight it became a reading police. Which is not what I wanted to be at all. And nor did they want me there in, in that position. So teachers were fighting it tooth and nail but fourth was the most vocal group. [CRT interview, May 10, 2002]

As noted earlier, most of the fourth grade teachers refused to be part of this research. When invited, they claimed that their relationship with Mr. Dovish was weakened by the conflict at the beginning of the year, they did not want to be accused of saying anything negative, therefore declined participation.

While Mr. Dovish addressed the fourth grade team after the inservice training, explaining why he mandated *Reading Mastery*, he did not address the third grade team. Thus, the third grade teachers were left with partial information that led to misunderstandings between Mr. Dovish and the teachers. Similar to Brown's study (1993), lack of communication led to mistrust. The third grade teachers did not vocalize their objections to the administration, and as a result did not understand Mr. Dovish's perspective or his motivation. They made comments in the privacy of their classrooms, and only reluctantly shared their perspective. The mistrust that developed was most evident in the new monitoring policy, which disturbed both third grade teachers who were interviewed for this study. Mr. Dovish never directly addressed unsatisfactory

performance with the teachers, but left them to conclude as much by making policy changes at the same time he mandated *Reading Mastery*:

Mrs. P: As a matter of fact this year there was even more um stress on timing. In the past they kind of left you alone. But this year they, they were keeping track of exactly how many *Reading Mastery* lessons you do every week.

N: And who's keeping track?

Mrs. P: CRT.

N: And do you know the reasoning behind that at all?

Mrs. P: I believe they felt we went too slow. Took too many breaks or whatever.

N: Um how did you feel about that?

Mrs. P: Again you know we're, cause I'm a teacher; I have a master's degree, where's my . . . is this autonomy?

(Mrs. P tears up at this point in the interview) [3T2 interview, Mar. 5, 2002]

Mrs. Phillips believes that Mr. Dovish is unsatisfied with her performance and increased the monitoring as a result. She is emotionally affected by Mr. Dovish's perceived lack of confidence in her as a teacher. She does not understand why his style of leadership changed, Mr. Dovish does not explicitly share his decision-making process with the third grade team. Instead, Mr. Dovish sends messages of disapproval regarding their performance to the teachers. This is confirmed by Mrs. Laurent when she explains that, though Mr. Dovish may not have meant to give negative messages to his teachers, that is what happened:

> This is the first year they've been forced to do *Reading Mastery*. So it's not that the kids, the scores haven't gone up yet. They haven't gone up in the past. And a lot of teachers said to him, "But we've done *Reading Mastery* in the past and the kids aren't improving," and he said, "Well if you've done it, maybe you haven't been doing it right," which someone should have kicked him for saying something like that. And we had other teachers say things like, "But I've already been trained. Why do I have to go through the training again?" And he would say things like, "Well, I'm sure you've gotten lax in what you're doing." And I mean he was

> getting heat from all over about this decision of his and he was getting real aggravated with having to do it. And so he, he did make the implication that they hadn't done it right. [CRT interview, May 10, 2002]

These negative messages influenced both Mrs. Phillips and Mrs. Zeigler, who comments in her interview how she felt being so closely monitored:

> N: How does that make you feel?
>
> Mrs. Z: I don't know. I think I've been monitored my whole teaching career so I'm really at the point where, "Oh well."
>
> N: How many years have you been teaching?
>
> Mrs. Z: About 15. Give or take.
>
> N: You're an ESE teacher, right?
>
> Mrs. Z: That's right.
>
> N: So you've been monitored through those controls?
>
> Mrs. Z: Through all those other channels, yeah.
>
> N: Does it affect you that you have expertise that you're not able to execute?
>
> Mrs. Z: Yeah, I think to some extent. I mean I think it's got to. You know? You ought to be able to give everything you've got to those kids. So you do as much as you can for them and when you're so constrained to this little box that you know you just, you kind of wonder why. But you do it anyway because you know you have to. [3T1 interview, Mar.10, 2002]

Mrs. Zeigler and Mrs. Phillips do not understand Mr. Dovish's motivation and reasoning behind mandating Reading Mastery. Their lack of understanding led to mistrust in their relationship with Mr. Dovish. According to Brown (1993), 'deskilling of teachers' results when curricular decisions are taken away from teachers because of mandated testing. The term deskilling originated in 1974 with Braverman's theory that breaking down a complex work process into simple, unskilled tasks reduces the cost of labor but it also disenfranchises workers (Goodman, 1992; Marshall, 1998). Braverman's theory has been applied by social scientists to many fields, including education where,

"according to critical educators, technical control of schooling through textbooks 'deskill' the teachers who use them" (Shannon, 1990, p. 153). However, Hoffman and his colleagues (1995) dispute that all teachers who use basals are deskilled workers. "We observed little of the kind of homogeneity one would expect to find if teachers were blindly following the traditional basal programs currently adopted in their districts as a script or a recipe for instructional practice" (p. 27). In this rebuttal of Shannon's findings, Hoffman qualifies deskilling as blindly following programs, such as scripts or recipes. Teachers in scripted programs are required to blindly follow the script. Scripted programs exert even more technical control over the teachers than textbooks and basal series, and without doubt, deskill the teachers who are mandated to follow them (Williamson and Churchill, 1996).

Third grade retention is not the only factor that contributes to Mr. Dovish's frustration, for he disagrees with the State's grading plan and recognizes the inequity in a system that compares general scores across the state without taking into consideration the many factors that influence students' literacy development. While Mr. Dovish expresses that he does not disagree with the tests themselves, and even notes that the FCAT is one of the better tests stating, "I really like the more, the performance type test," he does disagree with how the test scores are being used:

> What I don't like is that they have taken different chunks of the whole testing program and used them for purposes that they weren't designed for which is really to take in some simplistic score and creating a school grade for it. And that has changed every year, which suggests to me they still, only won't admit it, they know they don't have it figured out yet. And their grade does not take into consideration how effective a school really is. And I would define a school's effectiveness by you know how it does with whichever kids walk in the door and how much better they're doing when they walk out the door at the end of fifth grade or whatever. And because we don't have any control over who walks in the door and/or their environment or their circumstances so all we can do is take them wherever they are

> and teach them as much as we possibly can so they're in a lot better shape when they leave. And, and I think that's true of a poor school; I think it's, it's true of an affluent school. Um but this grading process does not take that into consideration. You know it looks at achievement as an absolute thing and it doesn't recognize that at [Shoals] or [a local struggling school] you know if kids come in in the lower quartile you know and which is where they're expected to when they come from impoverished homes and they leave in one of the middle quartiles, then that's pretty tremendous. Where if a kid from a west side school you know, comes in in the third quartile and leaves in the third quartile then you know they're all excited because those are high scores but you know has that kid really progressed? Have they really learned much? You know has the school really added value to his education? Or are they just smart kids with a lot of experience who read well and, and they haven't done any damage? [P interview, May 18, 2002]

Mr. Dovish knows that many of the students at his school begin each school year much less prepared than the majority of the students in many schools in the local school district, yet they are graded using the same measures. Test bias is not a new topic in educational research. Tests are biased against minority and poor populations (Kohn, 2002), they are primarily used to sort students (Allington, 2002; Graves, 2000; Kohn, 1999; Smith, 1986; Wasserman, 2001), and when high-stakes are attached, they serve to limit the educational opportunities of students by limiting instruction as teachers focus their curriculum around test-prep materials and activities. "The use of high-stakes strategy only underscores the preoccupation with these tests and, as a result, accelerates a reliance on direct instruction techniques and endless practice" (Kohn, 2002, p. 252). Mr. Dovish recognizes the unfairness and futility in this system in which he and his school are caught. He also recognizes the harm the reward system causes his teachers:

> The deck is stacked against the schools and it's very frustrating for schools that are really showing gains and doing a good job because you know this system of rewarding schools doesn't work very well for them and it doesn't really reward what it's supposed to do, which is school reform and look at what you're doing and evaluating and, and trying to make things happen. And that's had an impact here too I think because teachers, well the last two years, our kids were like that much away from what would have been an A designation. And that you know a couple kids in a couple of subjects didn't you know who got a 2 instead of 3 we didn't do

> it. And it's just very frustrating for the teachers because of all of the things that they've done and all the things that we've done and they tend to think that again the deck is stacked against them. [P interview, May 18, 2002]

Mr. Dovish struggles with how the grading system in Florida affects his teachers. State policy rewards "A" schools, and schools that improve by at least one letter grade by awarding additional funding of $100 per student. This "reward" quickly becomes "punishment" for teachers who work in schools, like Shoals, that have managed to increase student performance and reach a stable performance rate, unless the school has a high SES with an above average population who are most likely to stabilize as top scorers on standardized tests. Not only are there financially punitive measures involved in testing in Florida, but it has become common practice for local newspapers to publish school grades and test scores, leaving the general population with limited information that is often translated to mean "A" schools = "A" teachers. These practices serve as public admonishment for principals, teachers, and students and are based on a very dangerous assumption that "everything deficient about education for poor and minority children can be remedied by more forceful demands" (Kohn, 2002, p. 253). Mr. Dovish knows that his teachers "can teach circles around" many teachers in the "A" schools even though they are presented to the general public as being less than that. Mr. Dovish is very protective of his teachers, and values their work:

> it bugs me that someone else has decided that these are essentially C teachers and those are A teachers when I know that's you know I would say the reverse is probably true. And that's, that's a problem I have with the grading system. It really doesn't indicate what effectiveness the teachers specifically, or the school in general, has had. [P interview, May 18, 2002]

The "C" school grade implies to everyone that Mr. Dovish's school is average and that his teachers are average. This upsets Mr. Dovish, who clearly admires his faculty stating, "I think I've got the strongest faculty in the school district." He recognizes their

individual strengths and notes that he really has no "stinkers" or bad teachers. Mr. Dovish resents the state's practice of presenting school grades as a measure of the effectiveness of his faculty. This practice has attracted the attention of many professional educators:

> the implication here would seem to be that teachers and students *could* be doing a better job but have for some reason chosen not to and they need only to be bribed or threatened into improvement.... The focus among policymakers has been on standards of outcome rather than standards of opportunity. (Kohn, 2002, p. 253)

Mr. Dovish is not alone in his objection to using high-stakes measures to reward and punish schools. In fact, 66% of the general population is opposed to withholding state or federal funds and 31% favor awarding *more* state and federal funds to schools that do not show progress toward state-approved standards (Rose and Gallup, 2001). In spite of the evidence against its effectiveness, politicians and policymakers continue to focus on high-stakes accountability and legislation that removes control from principals.

The Teachers' Views on Literacy Development

Teachers in this research show strong evidence of deskilling. Their autonomy is robbed by the principal's direct orders to implement a program in which they had no collaborative input regarding implementation. The program design deskills the teachers by requiring them to closely follow a script that prevents them from acting on their personal knowledge about teaching and learning. To fully understand how severely *Reading Mastery* compromises the professionalism of the teachers, it is necessary to understand their views on literacy development.

Much like Mr. Dovish, the teachers in this research recognize the need for student engagement during learning. Children notice literacy in their environments, and develop a natural desire to interact with it, propelling their language development forward.

Cambourne refers to this as immersion (1995), which he defines as "the state of being saturated by, enveloped in, flooded by, seeped in, or constantly bathed in that which is to be learned" (p. 185). The teachers describe literacy events and interaction with peers and adults as evidence of the critical role not only of immersion. According to Cambourne, engagement requires immersion and demonstration, which he identifies as seeing, hearing, witnessing, experiencing, feeling, studying, and exploring language. Cambourne gives an example that illustrates the role of demonstration:

> Father asking at the breakfast table, "Will you pass the butter please?" and the subsequent passing of it is not only a demonstration of what that particular sequence of sound means but also a demonstration of what language can be used for, how it functions, how it can be tied to action, what kind of language is appropriate for the setting we call "breakfast" and so on. (p. 185)

Mrs. Phillips shares a similar example, telling the story of her own son, and how he learned his alphabet by reading the letters on the side of the apartment buildings where they lived when he was a preschooler:

> He was four when we moved into an apartment complex where the buildings were lettered, and we lived in building S. And he learned his alphabet A-S without my even knowing just because we drove past all those buildings all the time. And all of a sudden one day I realized that he knew his alphabet A-S but T, U, V, W, X, Y, and Z he had no clue about… he liked to read the license plates on cars. And [one day] he said, "What's that mom?" Well it was U. And he didn't know what a U was. So from then we had to drive out one way out of the complex so he could see all those buildings and come back in the other way …You know [kids learn literacy] just by being, by being in this world you learn that stuff. If you're patient with the kids, eventually he's going to learn all kinds of stuff on his own. [3T1 interview, Mar 5, 2002]

Mr. Wright also tells a personal story that supports Cambourne's theory of the conditions necessary for language learning. Mr. Wright remembers the praise he received reading at a young age. This personal experience influences his beliefs that children need access to books, encouragement, and engagement which lead them to develop an intrinsic love for

reading. According to Mr. Wright, it is the intrinsic love for reading that enables students to truly benefit from reading instruction:

> There are a lot of things that start literacy but I think the most important thing is that they have an intrinsic love for it. And that usually starts when being read to and reading with other people. And I think there are those skills that they have to pick up along the way. But I think that the more that you give them opportunities to read on their own, in addition to reading with other people, are really what helps it begin. I mean, I learned how to read when I was little and I was just read to all the time. I loved reading and there were books available to me. Books that I, if I saw I wanted a book, it was always something that I got. I was lucky. And I just picked it up and I didn't have any specific skilled instruction at first. But I knew how to read the words and I got all excited because here I was, *little*. Everyone would say, "Look at this! He can read this. Read the horoscopes." That's what my next-door neighbor would do when I was in kindergarten. I had to read the horoscopes. And you know while Sagittarius tripped me up it was still really neat for everyone to think, "Wow that's amazing!" And then of course it made you want to do it more cause everyone kept saying how great you were at it. So I believe that when you get the kids motivated to do it, that way when there is a new skill or something that you need to teach them about it, it's kind of like: "Okay, and while you're looking at this and you're reading your books, think about--*I wonder how she does this?*" And you could teach them a whole bunch of things from that. So that's the building block, I think, in which everything else is built. [4T2 interview, May 10, 2002]

Mr. Wright recognizes the role of home experiences, availability of books for children, and multiple opportunities to read with others in literacy development in children. He states the importance of positive literacy events and how they help provide opportunities for skill instruction that advance reading. For Mr. Wright, the bottom line is that kids must first *love* reading.

Intrinsic motivation is also part of Mrs. Jones's belief system. However, Mrs. Jones goes one step further than Mr. Wright--she tells her students that they should love reading. Mrs. Jones reveals her feelings when she responds to a student who asks if Mrs. Jones will give her a treat for completing a novel. Mrs. Jones quickly replies, "I will do no such thing. You should finish that book because you want to finish that book, not because I bribed you to finish it!" [Field notes, Jan. 28. 2002].

Young readers seeing other children read is crucial in literacy development. This includes seeing people in their homes as well as classmates at school. Mrs. Zeigler expresses how this benefits children:

> … seeing other people read. There's a huge advantage in that for kids. I mean, I think that gets their, their motivation and their wanting to read I think it is a big step. And if they don't see people reading I think it just doesn't seem to matter. That it's not as important whether they're able to read or not, at least at the younger ages. [Seeing others read] builds the desire. And if the desire is there then we can build on the phonics and the sounds and all the other stuff. And then … when they start reading the desire gets brighter and brighter which just keeps them motivated to want to learn more and master harder words and decoding, and more decoding and that kind of stuff. [3T1 interview, Mar. 20, 2002]

Exposure to others reading is also demonstration. "Learners are more likely to engage deeply with demonstrations if they believe that they are capable of ultimately learning or doing whatever is being demonstrated" (Cambourne, 1995, p. 186). Students need to see other kids reading as it creates a desire for them to want to join the club (Smith, 1986) and become readers too. The teachers report their belief that literate home environments advance literacy development, and for some students, being in literate environments is enough. "Just by being" some kids learn to read with ease. When books are readily available to children, they become familiar with and comfortable with them well before they are expected to master the skill of reading. Children who see other people read, both adults and children, are motivated to learn to read. Curiosity about reading and efforts to master the skills needed to enjoy reading increases with exposure to other readers. All of these examples from the teachers lead to engagement (Cambourne, 1995) as necessary conditions of learning:

> Engagement incorporates a range of different behaviors. It has overtones of attention; learning is unlikely if learners do not attend to demonstrations in which they are immersed. However, attention is unlikely if there is not perceived need or purpose for learning in the first place. Engagement also depends on active

> participation by the learner, which in turn involves some risk-taking; learners can participate actively only if they are prepared to "have a go." (p. 185)

Mrs. Phillips agrees, stating her belief that kids will learn what they need to learn to function in our society. Because of this, she believes our school curriculum should reinforce the real uses of literacy. Examples include students learning to write through emailing communications, reading age-appropriate children's literature, and a curriculum centered around topics that children's minds are able to developmentally understand. A prevailing belief among the teachers is that literacy, specifically reading, is developed in a number of ways but an essential criterion is that instruction should have some connection and meaning in students' lives. The examples above all illustrate personal connections in literacy events: Mrs. Phillips's son reading the letters on the apartment building, Mr. Wright's experience reading to his neighbor, and Mrs. Zeigler's explanation of how the desire to read opens opportunities for instruction for young readers. Mrs. Phillips states in her interview: "The kids will learn, and they'll learn what they need to learn because it's useful to them" [3T2 interview, May 5, 2002]. Mrs. Jones notes, "I am trying to find as much time as I can for the students to enjoy reading because that's what makes them want to learn more" [Field notes, Jan. 15, 2002].

In many ways, the teachers at Shoals are caught in a tug of war (Buckner, 2002). They are constantly pulled back and forth between curriculum mandates and by their own knowledge of what they should and want to do in the classroom. This is especially true when it comes to using children's literature in the classrooms. The teachers yearn for the administration's support to teach reading using novels. Mr. Wright comments, "If we met [with the administration] and our feelings were taken into account then I'm sure all of us in fourth grade would be teaching novels again" [4T1 interview, May 10, 2002].

Mrs. Jones repeatedly expresses enjoyment of teaching reading with the novel-based Pegasus program she had taught in prior years. The third grade teachers agree. They contend that reading novels challenges students as readers and enables teachers to teach numerous comprehension strategies, improve specific skills, build vocabulary, and integrate various forms of literacy. Among those strategies specifically noted by teachers in the interviews are summarizing; comparing and contrasting using Venn diagrams; question-answer relationships (QAR); and opinion proofs.

The teachers are also tugged by the need to teach writing in the context of reading. Sharing novels enables them to integrated reading and writing instruction:

> We're doing writing but it's a separate entity with *Reading Mastery*. You had a whole separate curriculum with *Reading Mastery*. With the novel, it's always better than the [*Reading Mastery*] story. You take all your writing that you're doing from the story, which is nice because then the kids can relate to writing and get some better ideas. They don't have to come up with something off the top of their head, which is good at this level. [3T1 interview, Mar. 20, 2002]

Finally, each teacher comments on the importance of continuity of instruction with the same students over a period of time. The teachers participating in this research preferred self-contained classrooms. They provide more consistency for teachers and students. They allow teachers to teach specific reading comprehension skills and strategies throughout the day without repeating instruction for some or dealing with the probability that students from their reading class will "miss" important instruction. Furthermore, self-contained classrooms provide a multilevel environment that benefits the students. Mrs. Phillips's explained her preference for multilevel, self-contained classrooms:

> Well first of all, the low kids have to see that there are kids their age that can do all this stuff. You know, so "Oh wow! Maybe I should be trying to do a little more." And the upper kids need to develop some patience with people that aren't as far as

> they are. We've seen it in the inclusive classrooms where the students help the low kids or the handicapped child with far more patience and empathy than most adults. [3T2 interview, Mar. 5, 2002]

The belief that multilevel classrooms benefit all levels of learners is the foundation of the teachers' belief in the social nature of learning. Students learn from each other. They learn by watching each other, by challenging each other and themselves, and by developing individual skills that they need to advance their own communication, expression and understanding of the world around them. It is the social nature of learning that motivates children and builds a curiosity and a love for reading. Student motivation is the building block that forms the foundation of any literacy instruction. "If you don't have that it doesn't matter if you do phonetic teaching or if you do whole language teaching. No matter what, you have to have that… if they love it and they enjoy it, then it doesn't matter cause they'll be willing to do whatever they have to" [4T2 interview, May 10, 2002].

Neither teaching nor learning can occur outside the emotional world of the teachers and learners. We have learned from the business world that "employee morale has become a central priority" and "when workers are disgruntled, distracted, or poorly trained, no brilliant strategy for expanding market share will compensate for that liability. Why should it be any different for schools?" (Cohen, p. 533). High-stakes testing and imposing curriculum in classrooms lowers the morale of both teachers and students. The analysis of how *Reading Mastery* treats teaching and learning presented in the last chapter illustrates the mismatch between the teachers' beliefs and their practice. Comparing schools' standardized test scores and ignoring "the one critical player in the school who makes the biggest difference" – the teacher – does not measure effective teaching.

> For a school to be an intellectual center, for it to have the ethos, the sense of community, and the "spirit" that so many parents and administrators seek, it must celebrate the work of its teachers in a way rarely seen in public schools. It must attend to the needs of teachers, it must accommodate their sensibilities, and it must treat the teachers' contributions with as much genuine concern as it does those of any other constituency--maybe more. (Cohen, p. 533)

This sense of community is what Mr. Dovish had developed in his school prior to imposing curriculum on his teachers. Their professional opinions were part of the decision-making process in the school. They were part of a collaborative team. This empowerment became disempowerment when their curriculum became test-driven. According to Buckner (2002), a fourth grade teacher who struggles with first-hand knowledge that teaching has become more about testing and test scores than is about real learning, teachers who make decisions based on a test become powerless. They are powerless to make reasonable instructional decisions and powerless to do what is best for the learners sitting in front of them.

The teachers at Shoals experienced this sense of powerlessness and loss of control over their instruction. The National Reading Panel (NRP) cautions against deskilling teachers and reducing control over the instructional designs implemented in their classrooms:

> The role of the teacher needs to be better understood. Some of the phonics programs showing large effect sizes are scripted in such a way that teacher judgment is largely eliminated. Although scripts may standardize instruction, they may reduce teachers' interest in the teaching process or their motivation.... Knowing that all phonics programs are not the same brings with it the implication that teachers must themselves be educated about how to evaluate programs, to determine which are based on strong evidence and how they can be most effectively used in their own classrooms. (2-96)

In spite of the NRP's concern for respecting teachers' knowledge, much like the teachers in this research, teachers all over the country are being mandated to ignore their professional expertise and blindly follow scripts.

Teachers Become Technicians

One goal of this research is to identify how and if teachers are able to retain some measure of control over their curriculum when literacy instruction is imposed upon them. What follows is an analysis of each teacher and the ability they have to influence curriculum decision. In all four cases, teachers retain little or no control over their instruction.

"We Are Building Vocabulary"

Mrs. Phillips has been teaching for eighteen years. She has taught in both public and private schools and has used a variety of methods to teach reading. Mrs. Phillips has been using *Reading Mastery* for at least 6 years, but until this year she was not mandated to strictly follow the program. When Mrs. Phillips first started teaching the *Reading Mastery* program, she was working with below grade level students and she found it to be a suitable program. However, more recently, Mrs. Phillips was asked to use *Reading Mastery* to teach above grade level and on grade level students. Mrs. Phillips very strongly voices her opinion that *Reading Mastery* is "not adequate at all for above grade level learners, they need something far different." Mrs. Phillips recalls that when she was first given above grade level readers in her *Reading Mastery* class she "didn't know what to do with them." That year, she used level 4 with the students because the grade level materials were "not adequate"; the reading materials were limited, there were no "inference or higher order thinking skills" required of the students. The next year, Mrs. Phillips was assigned grade level readers, and she dropped back to the level designed for third graders, level 3. This year, Mrs. Phillips has twenty-four students on grade level in her reading class. Although Mrs. Phillips qualifies the program as "adequate" for on grade level readers, she would rather teach a different program.

Mrs. Phillips describes *Reading Mastery Level 3* as a "transition" from the very phonics based earlier levels to a year of vocabulary building and teaching the students to read for information [Interview 3T1, May 16, 2002]. Because the students are learning to read for information, the reading sections and comprehension questions are all recall detail questions. The students are reading to learn facts, not to develop higher order thinking strategies and habits. The questions in *Reading Mastery* are what Mrs. Phillips refers to as "right there questions" that are details given in the text, not questions that require synthesis, analysis or evaluation of what is read.

Mrs. Phillips approves more of the skill development the program included than the reading comprehension component. According to Mrs. Phillips, the word review and vocabulary were well designed because the students learn words during this section of the lesson that they are going to need and words that are part of their speaking vocabularies. Furthermore, Mrs. Phillips states that *Reading Mastery* allows student participation because of the response pattern the program has established:

> Mrs. P: It allows a lot of children to read aloud a lot because they do choral work on all the vocabulary. And many of the questions when we're reading the story, many of the questions are total class. They'll say okay everyone what was the temperature? And the class responds 37 degrees Celsius. So there's a lot of opportunity for student response. Much, much more in *Reading Mastery* than in another program.
>
> N: What about the actual reading of the text?
>
> Mrs. P: Everybody reads every day at least three or four sentences. [3T2 interview, Mar. 5, 2002]

Overall, Mrs. Phillips assesses the materials as "reasonable" for her group, but she does object to the quantity of skill work the students do. The number of questions after each of the stories is excessive. Mrs. Phillips notes there are "pages and pages of questions on every single lesson." She commented that while some of the units have too

many lessons to hold the students' attention, for the most part the individual reading assignments and the number of lessons in a unit are appropriate. Phonics instruction is not part of the reading instruction because, according to Mrs. Phillips's understanding of *Reading Mastery*, if students are placed on level three, they "supposedly know their phonics and we are building vocabulary." For the few students who do not know phonics, she speculates that they were not taught *Reading Mastery* from the beginning.

Mrs. Phillips clearly states that with grade level and above readers, she prefers not to teach *Reading Mastery*. She does not agree that *Reading Mastery* is appropriate for all students, she does not like homogeneous grouping. Mrs. Phillips knows that for *Reading Mastery* to be effective the students must be grouped according to achievement, however, she prefers to teach literacy in a heterogeneous group using a different program.

She objects more to what is not part of the reading program than she does what is present. The absence of quality children's literature, teaching reading comprehension strategies, and high order thinking opportunities for the students disturb Mrs. Phillips. She also disagrees with the rapid pace and timing of the program. The school monitoring the number of lessons that each reading class completes pressures her to continue forward progress at the pace prescribed by the program manuals. Finally, even though the administration extended the time for reading instruction, Mrs. Phillips is unable to include any writing instruction in her reading block as long as she teaches *Reading Mastery*.

There are a number of inconsistencies in Mrs. Phillips's statements and actions, of which she seems to be unaware. For example, Mrs. Phillips states that *Reading Mastery* provides ample opportunities for her students to read aloud. The time reading aloud,

however, is very limited, with most of the choral response times that Mrs. Phillips counts as "reading aloud" requiring little or no reading. Mrs. Phillips states a concern that her students have no opportunity to learn higher order comprehension strategies, that students best learn these strategies while discussing books; yet Mrs. Phillips does not allow for this kind of discussion to take place in her classroom. Finally, Mrs. Phillips indicates that

Table 6-1. Mrs. Phillips according to Bascia & Hargreaves (2000)

Dimension and Description of Dimension	Evidence of Dimension in Data	Evidence of the Impact of Forced Change
Mrs. Phillips Socioemotional "Teacher as Socializer" Continuous relationships with students, colleagues and communities are foundational to high-quality teaching and learning	Writes a grant for her grade level to meet the needs of the new Social Studies Grade Level Expectations. Silently cues students who have lost their place while reading aloud, ignoring the program directions to skip their turn and take points away from the class. Frequently discusses the emotional needs of her students stating that she is unable to meet their needs.	"I have a master's degree. . . . Autonomy. I don't have any. I don't have any in any of the subject areas at all. I tried to grasp some when I did the mini-grant for the middle ages. I thought that might make me feel better. It didn't because I really don't want to teach the middle ages to 8 year olds" [3T2 interview, Mar. 5, 02]. Leaves all teaching to the various programs, rarely tries to add the elements that she knows to be effective teaching measures while implementing programs. Compares herself to a computer while discussing why she stays in the profession: "I'd like to think I can make a little difference, even though um you know I'm in this groove that I have to follow. At least I can add my personality to the groove. Hopefully it's a little better than computer instruction [3T2 Interview, Mar. 5, 2002] "Maybe I'm not motivating them properly, but the [AR] program is supposed to motivate them. Not me. They're given a time every day where they can do their reading" [3T2 Interview, Mar. 5, 2002].

she is fully aware of the students' off-task behavior, yet she never corrects the students nor does she interact with them to engage them in their reading.

These inconsistencies make it necessary to look beyond the surface evidence of her current practice to seek to understand the affect that the imposed curriculum has on Mrs. Phillips. Integrating her words with her behavior, it becomes clear that she is what Bascia and Hargreaves (2000) qualify as understanding teaching from a socioemotional dimension. Her concern for her students is a reoccurring theme in her interview, and the effect the mandated change has had on Mrs. Phillips' teaching is consistent with what is expected from a teacher who has prolonged pressure to follow a scripted program:

> Reform strategies that are primarily content-driven and standards-based perpetuate structures that serve content rather than children; and when teachers' efforts are focused on implementing detailed curriculum requirements, they are distracted from maintaining core continuous relationships with students, colleagues and communities that are foundational to high-quality teaching and learning (p. 11).

Relationships are important to Mrs. Phillips. In her attempts to balance her relationship with her colleagues, her students and her administration, she finds herself in conflict, which is supported by the number of negative emotions expressed during her interview. Mrs. Phillips often revealed past practices that are not congruent with current practice. For example, Mrs. Phillips describes past teaching that included integrated themes: "We used to have units that we would do that included arts and crafts activities, literature, math, science, all within the unit" [3T2 Interview, Mar. 5, 2002]. At that time in her career, I believe that she probably did NOT approach teaching from a "technical" perspective however, at this point in her career, her teaching indicates that teaching is now defined as following a series of procedures. Mrs. Phillips becomes the technical teacher that Mr. Dovish asks her to become, acting on a narrow, restricted view of

teaching and learning regardless of her knowledge about teaching and understanding of her students' needs. She implements the programs that the school or the district provide, unable to act on her students' personal and behavioral needs. Mrs. Phillips's defeat became clear when asked why she does not fight to regain some of the autonomy she used to have in teaching:

> Mrs. P: Probably not because I'm a cynic and I think nothing would change.
>
> N: You don't think anything can change?
>
> Mrs. P: I think it could change but it would take more than teachers going down and rallying. It, it would take somebody like a governor that's totally different to come in and, and say we're going to revise the whole system.

Mrs. Phillips recognizes the pressure to focus on test scores is not Mr. Dovish's agenda, but a systemic problem that connects to policies the governor has implemented. The pressure put on Mrs. Phillips to follow the script is something she sees as part of the larger picture of mandated reform. Coupled with the other mandates that are imposed on her, Mrs. Phillips develops a sense of hopelessness:

> There are people now telling us we have to do this, and we have to do it this way, and it takes the autonomy of the teacher away…. It's frustrating. It's very frustrating because … there's so much we have to cram in our curriculum now that it has taken the fun out of teaching. We used to have units that we would do that included arts and crafts activities, literature, math, and science all within the unit. But we can't do them now because we have to teach directed reading or directed math and even in writing they're telling us exactly how to teach the writing. So, first of all, you have a limited amount of time, and you have to get it all done before the FCAT because why would you bother teaching it after the FCAT? And so you don't have time for the fun stuff, and it means everything is chopped up and I don't think the children see any of it in a real world realm. They don't see the connection between what they're studying and what they're going to use at all, which is frustrating. [3T2 interview, Mar. 5, 2002]

As Mrs. Phillips sees it, the fun has been taken out of teaching, and she does not know how to get it back. Each day she faces a room full of students with diverse needs and backgrounds. She knows that each student needs individual attention, relevant

curriculum, and to have a little fun. However, her day has been designed by people outside her classroom. She has no way to regain control.

> Autonomy, I don't have any. I don't have any in any of the subject areas. I tried to grasp some when I did the mini-grant for the middle ages. I thought that might make me feel better, you know? It didn't, because I don't really want to teach the Middle Ages to 8 year olds. I did delve into the literature that's available for kids for the Middle Ages… but the majority of the books; book after book after book that I found was geared for children aged 9-12. Well, I don't have a lot of kids that are going to read books that are geared for 9-12. I have a whole lot of kids that will read books geared 6-9 you know, so maybe the topic is a little advanced. [3T2 interview, Mar. 5, 2002]

The school district has written Grade Level Curriculum Guides that follow the Grade Level Expectations that are aligned with the relatively new Sunshine State Standards. After teaching for eighteen years, Mrs. Phillips feels these shifts in curriculum have resulted in a completely new style of teaching. Furthermore, the FCAT is aligned with the Sunshine State Standards. Mrs. Phillips recognizes that these decisions are made at the district level, but also that they are driven by the new Sunshine State Standards. "If a school or a county [district] is going to follow those standards then you don't have any choices. They adopt the textbooks you are going to use, they tell you what concepts you have to cover" [3T2 interview, Mar. 5, 2002]. Mrs. Phillips clearly sees herself executing someone else's plan.

"It Doesn't Teach"

As noted in Chapter 5, Mrs. Zeigler does not voice her objections to teaching *Reading Mastery* to the larger school community. Although I knew that Mrs. Zeigler would have preferred to teach reading in a different way, I did not know that she had such strong, specific criticisms of *Reading Mastery* as were revealed in her interview. A certified Special Education teacher, Mrs. Zeigler has extensive experience teaching *Reading Mastery*. She has been teaching fifteen years, and has taught *Reading Mastery*

Levels 1-5. This year her group of twenty students consists of on-level readers. And this year is Mrs. Zeigler's first year as a regular education teacher. Mrs. Zeigler's routines are well established; her students know what they are responsible for doing at any given moment.

Because Mrs. Zeigler is a special education teacher and *Reading Mastery* is often used with students with disabilities, I expected to find a level of comfort in Mrs. Zeigler's classroom while she taught *Reading Mastery*. My expectations were met; Mrs. Zeigler knows the procedures well. However, in reflecting on her reading instruction, Mrs. Zeigler is critical of the program, and she expresses limited student benefits. While Mrs. Zeigler believes *Reading Mastery* is a good place for the students to start their reading instruction because they need structure, and *Reading Mastery* has structure, she believes that the continued use of the program lowers her students' motivation. She sees a change in her students: "After a while, the kids were like, *Okay, we're past this*, and I could see it in them, because their motivation to do it was less and less as we went on. And my motivation got less and less, and I think those two go hand-in-hand" [3T1 interview, Mar. 10, 2002]. She notes that the immature look of the textbook, the poor stories and the content in the stories dampen the students' excitement: "I think that's a huge problem with *Reading Mastery*; the stories are just so "out there" that the kids can't really relate to a lot of the content because the stories don't make a lot of sense." Mrs. Zeigler also states that the presentation of the reading materials lower her students' motivation. She notes "it looks like a baby book to them because it's got kind of the symbols on it for the sounds" [3T1 interview, Mar. 10, 2002].

While the program helps the students learn to answer the "right there" questions, the program never moves out of the detail questioning into higher order thinking. "There are more right-there questions than there are any other thought provoking, critical thinking questions. It, it doesn't make the kids think at all. It doesn't teach the kids" [3T1 interview, Mar. 10, 2002]. Mrs. Zeigler also sees no evidence of transfer to other content areas. For example, the lesson described in Chapter 4 does not include an introduction of the concepts of city, state and country even though it requires the students to label the diagrams in their workbooks:

> They just identify it, they didn't teach it. I don't think *Reading Mastery* has taught very many concepts at all. It is just, "Here it is, this is what it is. Okay, know it." And it repeats it as many times as the story goes on. So they get the repetition, which is good, but actually being taught the concept, that you have to add to the program. The group you teach depends on how much you have to bring in. [3T1 interview, Mar. 10, 2002]

The model of instruction, "here it is, learn it" affects how Mrs. Zeigler feels about other major components of reading instruction as well. According to Mrs. Zeigler, vocabulary instruction is nothing more than "word attack." The students just pronounce the words; there is no phonics instruction, no decoding, and no sound pattern instruction:

> There's no real decoding instruction at this level. It's just word attack. That's all it is. They're looking at a word, they're pronouncing it, if they pronounce it wrong they correct it until they pronounce it correctly. But it's not, "Okay, here's the sound." It is not broken down into sounds at all. There is no sound patterns instruction. The words have to do with the story they're reading or about to read, but other than that, there is no real pattern or anything. [Interview 3T1, Mar. 10, 2002]

The teacher provides vocabulary definitions and therefore the students do not have to use the context of the story or reference materials to learn new words. Mrs. Zeigler would like to see more relevant vocabulary instruction:

> they don't have to go find it. They don't have to think about it. They don't have to do anything with it. They're given it; they recite it back. It's a lot of okay,

> they're told that… they have to recite it back. There's no thinking involved, there's nothing about what you know. [Interview, 3T1, Mar. 10, 2002]

In other words, the instruction does not activate prior knowledge of the vocabulary words, or any discussion of known meanings. The focus is recite/repeat. This lack of instruction in the program is a problem for Mrs. Zeigler:

> I don't think there's a lot of skill, concept skill instruction at all. There's hardly any writing. There are more "right there" questions than there are any other thought-provoking critical thinking questions. It doesn't make the kids think at all. It doesn't teach the kids. I think it does okay with the questions like, "What did the story say about that?" but it isn't until you get to the higher levels that it even gets into any paragraph writing. [3T1 interview, Mar. 10, 2002]

The lack of writing in the program is problematic for Mrs. Zeigler. The workbook assignments are mostly fill-in-the-blank format and the students are not required to attend to spelling when they complete the workbooks. While Mrs. Zeigler knows that some of her students "really care about that and they really want to get it right" and others "don't have that intrinsic kind of motivation and will just write as close as they can get it and just go on." Mrs. Zeigler is unaware of any part of the program that is concerned with correctly spelling the answers, even if the answers contain words that are in the vocabulary section of the lesson: "There's nowhere in the program that I've found that says you have to have the words spelled correctly. Some have to be in complete sentences, but most are fill in the blanks" [3T1 interview, Mar. 10, 2002]. The lack of attention to application of skills the program claims to teach is problematic to Mrs. Zeigler. Ignoring what she considers to be good practice to meet the needs of a program, compromises her professionalism. To deviate from the script by following her understanding of good practice requires defying orders from the principal. Mrs. Zeigler did what Santman (2002) found commonplace practice: "Teachers across the nation were abandoning what they knew about good teaching and learning because the ramifications

for low test scores were and continue to be so deep.... This obsession with the test prevents thoughtfulness in teaching" (p. 204). The dilemma presents an underlying conflict for Mrs. Zeigler. The pressure to conform is strong enough for her to ignore all that she recognizes as inadequacies in *Reading Mastery*. When asked if the administration supports professional judgment and allows her to add to the *Reading Mastery* program, Mrs. Zeigler responds:

> You are supposed to follow a script and you are supposed to, you know, because if you don't follow script then your scores don't go up. Well it's because you didn't follow script--That's why the scores didn't go up. So you try and follow the script as much as you can so nobody can come back and say, yeah okay. [3T1 interview, Mar. 10, 2002]

Later in the interview, Mrs. Zeigler again refers to her administration's directives regarding the program:

> You're supposed to follow the script. According to the research that they have this script works and we're told we have to follow the script as close as possible. And that's what works. And that's what is going to get their scores up. [3T1 interview, Mar. 10, 2002]

Mrs. Zeigler feels monitored by the administration. In a number of informal conversations, she repeats the message above, and states that the administration told her that her student's lack of progress the year before was a result of her not teaching the program according to the script.

The emphasis that Mr. Dovish puts on following the script prevents the third grade teachers from personalizing or supplementing instruction. They feel accused of poor teaching and are unwilling or unable to draw on their professional knowledge to supplement weaknesses in the program. According to Bascia and Hargreaves's (2000) theory regarding mandated change, "the reality is that prescribed pedagogical change acts on a narrow, restricted view of teaching and learning" (p. 6). This is evidenced in this

research study. *Reading Mastery* views teaching as a set of skills, that once performed, will advance the learner's reading ability. Academic reinforcement for learning is limited to repetition and there is no component to address the emotional needs of the learner. Teachers who do not fit the technical description of teaching must adjust their beliefs and behaviors in order to execute the program.

Table 6-2. Mrs. Zeigler according to Bascia & Hargreaves (2000)

Dimension and Description of Dimension	Evidence of Dimension in Data	Evidence of the Impact of Forced Change
Mrs. Zeigler Intellectual "Teacher as Scholar" Teaching is complex, intellectual work that requires knowledge, expertise, reflection and continuous learning	Explicit, detailed description of what reading instruction entails. Disagrees with the way the decision to teach *Reading Mastery* was made; it does not include her perspective, "We were jut told this is the way it's going to be, that is what [the principal's] decision was" [3T1 interview, Mar. 5, 2002].	Executed scripted program even though she knows that it is lowering her students' motivation as the year progresses. Flat affect in the classroom that contrasted with a cheerful personality when not teaching.

Mrs. Zeigler and Mrs. Phillips both shared their perception that the administration does not approve of the way they executed the program the year before, however, their reactions to this accusation produced different results in the classroom. While the data indicates that Mrs. Phillips simply executed the programs required, Mrs. Zeigler put forth effort to extend her teaching beyond the programs. This is evident in two areas: diverging from the program to support students during the scripted correction; and teaching writing. This, along with her detailed description of the weaknesses in the

Reading Mastery program places Mrs. Zeigler within the intellectual dimension of teaching. It is this intellectual stance that helps Mrs. Zeigler perform: she evaluated her position of power (or lack of); she evaluates her knowledge; and she moves forward as necessary integrating as much instruction as she can manage.

Mrs. Zeigler's impact of forced change is similar to what is expected. Mrs. Zeigler is clearly "complying" with what her principal requested. In her second interview, when discussing *Reading Mastery*, Mrs. Zeigler uses a sarcastic tone when referring to, "following the script" [3T1 Interview, May 15, 2002]. She shows little or no excitement for teaching or learning, yet she smiles and jokes continuously when not talking about teaching.

"It Is Not a Building Block of Reading"

According to Mr. Wright, Reading Mastery is not a "building block of reading," rather, "it is just one more little thing we have to get through before we read" [4T2 Interview, May 2, 2002]. Unlike the other three teachers, Mr. Wright often deserts *Reading Mastery* and infuses his instruction with practices that aligned with his own beliefs that include using literature to instill motivation to learn to read. According to Mr. Wright, *Reading Mastery* teaches certain skills, he then uses those skills to teach other parts of reading through shared novels and research projects. Mr. Wright does not confine his reading instruction to *Reading Mastery* because, "Reading development varies in kids, and some kids need different things than others." Deviating from *Reading Mastery* allows Mr. Wright to integrate a variety of strategies. He believes that "we do a disservice sometimes when you assume that all kids learn the same way" [4T2 Interview, May 2, 2002].

When Mr. Wright teaches *Reading Mastery* he follows the script. His lessons are very fast paced. The program supports this pace and Mr. Wright capitalizes on it to enable him to get through enough of the program so as not to draw attention to his teaching at times that he sets the program aside. Mr. Wright's instruction follows the script very closely even though the program creates theoretical tensions for him. Two explicit problems that Mr. Wright mentions are that "sticking to the script does not allow for individual questions from the students to be addressed by the teacher" [4T2 Interview, May 2, 2002]. Therefore, when he deviates from the program, he works much more closely with his students to help them develop skills that enhanced their individual literacy needs. The second tension is present when Mr. Wright recognizes inaccuracies in the scientific correctness of the program content information. At times when Mr. Wright comes upon these inaccuracies, he explains them to the students as "fiction" even though the text may seem to be presented as fact. An example of this is shared during Mr. Wright's interview:

> I let them know that the point of our *Reading Mastery* book is to teach us reading skills.... I think the company who tried to make it tried to make it so you can incorporate different things in it, but they just didn't do enough research ...I make sure the kids know that separate, or almost, like they're all fiction even if they do have some scientific basis. [4T2 Interview, May 2, 2002]

Partly because of these inaccuracies, Mr. Wright engages his students in reading research projects.

> A lot of times I say, "Use information from the text to support your answer," and I also have the kids draw upon previous knowledge because we've studied the solar system this year and we know that half of what the [*Reading Mastery*] book says is only part of the truth. And so I use that to tell the kids that all the time when you read stuff you're not always getting the examples of the same truth. So the more you read the better off your knowledge is because one book might say one thing and one might say another. [4T2 Interview, May 2, 2002]

Mr. Wright finds it necessary to deviate from the script to correct inaccuracies in some of the lessons even though he knows that is frowned upon by both the program designers and his administration. One unit drew attention from some of his students, and Mr. Wright explains how he addressed the issue. The series of lessons focused on integrating measurement in reading, and in lesson 13, introduced Jokey, a fat beagle. In the story that the students read for lesson 13, a number of other animals ridicule Jokey. The main point of the lesson is delivered through the cat's response to Jokey in bold print, "**The more you eat, the fatter you get**" (Student Textbook, p. 45). In lesson 14, Jokey goes to the health spa, where poodles prance and "Jokey, of course, is the fattest dog in the exercise room" (Student Textbook, p. 49). The series of lessons continue, and in lesson 15, Jokey goes on a diet. It is this lesson that Mr. Wright captures in the interview, because Jokey's diet is to "quit eating." In the following series of lessons, Jokey goes off his diet, gorges himself on contents from the garbage, and then goes back on his diet. Eventually, he is successful:

> At the end of two months, you should have seen him. You would never know it was the same dog. He walked on his tiptoes. His belly was very, very small, and his chest stuck out with a row of ribs showing on each side. His legs had big muscles and so did his arms. (Student Textbook, p.61)

Mr. Wright could not let this series of lessons go without deviating from the script and discussing the serious issues that are presented as a message of the lessons:

> We discussed it as, "This is crazy!" You couldn't lose weight, you'd get sick and go to the hospital, you know. We talked about this sort of thing showing how it was humorous even. You know, I think it's really important to talk about these issues as they come up. The problem is that it's not scripted in the program and some people teach it without that [discussion]. And I think that that's something that I would hope most people would pick up on, but maybe they don't. [4T2 Interview, May 2, 2002]

Mr. Wright shares his concerns that *Reading Mastery* does not prepare the students for the FCAT. "*Reading Mastery* is very basic, limited, you know, 'right there' questions and the FCAT is so much beyond that." He struggles with time management issues, and has to choose between writing instruction or more developed reading instruction with what little extra time he has during the reading block. What results is a continuously evolving schedule that includes *Reading Mastery*, novel reading, report writing, FCAT writing instruction, and FCAT vocabulary instruction.

Mr. Wright holds leadership positions on the faculty that in many ways contribute to his confidence in putting aside the administration's plans and executing his own. According to the model presented in Bascia and Hargreaves, Mr. Wright is a perfect example of a sociopolitical teacher. He is held in high esteem by the administration and is able to control his own curriculum in spite of the fact that other teachers on faculty do not feel that same level of control.

What results is a constantly changing agenda in reading class. Given the fact that Mr. Wright's students are the most needy group of students in the research, this inconsistency may not benefit his students. In addition to the changing academic procedures, Mr. Wright is inconsistent in behavior management.

Mr. Wright conducts his classroom in a way that he describes as subconscious. At the beginning of the year, he evaluated what was required, added enough of what he thought was his philosophy, and worked to make it through the year:

> Realistically I think when I was coming into education I knew that people who made the rules in education had nothing to do with it and did not know anything about what it was like to teach a class. They were policy makers. I hear this commercial about how the governor is going to do all of this research on what good reading programs are and thinking he's spending all his time when he's supposed to be doing all these other things he's doing this when there are people who do it

> every day for a living. Why doesn't he ask them what they think, you know? But he's making the policy. So I knew that and I knew that I had to do what the policy was. But I also know that no matter who you are or what you are, I don't care if you're the President of the United States or the king of the universe you cannot force a teacher to hide their philosophy from the kids. It's impossible. [4T2 interview, May 2, 2002]

Although it may be impossible to hide his philosophy, it is equally impossible to execute it within the constraints imposed by following a scripted program--even if it is only half the time. As noted in the chart, Mr. Wright's methodology continually changes. He

Table 6-3. Mr. Wright according to Bascia & Hargreaves (2000)

Dimension and Description of Dimension	Evidence of Dimension in Data	Evidence of the Impact of Forced Change
Mr. Wright Sociopolitical "Teacher as Decision-maker" Teachers are involved in school-based curriculum development, leadership, unions, and advisory councils exerting some degree of control and influence	Shares that the way he attacks the job of teaching *Reading Mastery (RM)* is what makes it successful: he doesn't whine or complain – he does it, gets through it, and then moves the kids into novels. He thinks attitude is very important and his quickness and positiveness contribute to the kids' reading success [4T2 interview, Dec. 18, 2001]. Mr. Wright holds leadership positions on the faculty that in many ways contribute to his confidence in putting aside the administration's plans and executing his own.	Inconsistent schedule. The list below reveals the variety in class structure during Mr. Wright's reading block: 1/17 Writing 1/24 *RM*, writing 2/05 FCAT vocabulary, writing 2/07 Writing, Practice writing test 2/25 *RM* 2/26 *RM* 3/4 FCAT vocabulary, novel 3/21 FCAT vocabulary, poetry, novel, SSR 3/22 Novel, poetry, SSR 4/10 *RM* 4/11 FCAT vocabulary, *RM* 5/2 Research project 5/3 Research project Opposing messages sent to students regarding behavior management when teaching and not teaching *Reading Mastery* as noted in Chapter 4.

teaches *Reading Mastery* for a series of lessons, he then abandons it for a series of his own lessons that better fit his style of instruction. Since his classroom is not the only classroom in the research and literacy instruction took place on a school-wide block schedule, it is impossible to spend too many successive days in his classroom without neglecting other classrooms. Consequently, what results is a schedule that shows no patterns or consistency. Bascia and Hargreaves (2000) found that sociopolitical teachers are rendered powerless when they are forced to change, as others make decisions regardless of what power teachers may believe they hold. This is evident in Mr. Wright's reflection, as he shared, "I think that what I'm doing is what I'm supposed to do because I'm in charge of what my kids do and I'm following policy. I'm just maybe doing what they do anyway and finding loopholes in it" [4T2 interview, May 2, 2002].

The data shows that Mr. Wright really does not have control of his class, and indicate that he is not able to reach his students when he is teaching. His continued focus on behavior is problematic, for Mr. Wright is constantly in motion, constantly correcting his students. Mr. Wright describes his students as emotionally needy students with many problems at home and at school. When he is not teaching *Reading Mastery*, he is better able to meet the needs of individual students, but during *Reading Mastery* the students needs are dealt with by taking or giving points based on compliance.

"Is This Going to Help Them?"

Mrs. Jones believes that she should do what she is told to do because "that is the right thing to do." On a number of occasions, Mrs. Jones said that she is not in the position to make the decisions, that she does not enjoy teaching *Reading Mastery*, but this is what was decided was best for her students so she would do the very best she could do

and teach the program as asked. Because of this allegiance, Mrs. Jones implements the program and all its components following the program design. The time required executing the program as it is presented in the teacher's guide makes inclusion of other reading instruction during the reading block impossible. She has no time to add comprehension strategies not included in the program, nor is there time to infuse literature. All reading the students engage in outside the textbook is silent, independent reading and does not include comprehension strategy instruction.

Because Mrs. Jones's reading class is made up of a group of fourth graders performing on grade level, Mrs. Jones knows her students' test scores are critically important. Mrs. Jones needs to prepare her students for the FCAT Writing. Before teaching *Reading Mastery,* Mrs. Jones's class included language instruction and practice; vocabulary related to the novel the students were reading; reading with comprehension strategies imbedded in the lesson; and writing instruction as the final block of reading. When first implementing *Reading Mastery,* Mrs. Jones was unable to integrate any language exercises and writing instruction was very limited. As she struggled through this transition, Mrs. Jones removed language instruction and writing instruction. After teaching *Reading Mastery* for a month, Mrs. Jones was able to add writing back into the schedule. In late February, after the FCAT Writing test, Mrs. Jones focused less on writing instruction to allow more time for language instruction and independent reading.

According to Mrs. Jones, *reading* is not part of *Reading Mastery* instruction. The passages are too short, and the questioning is too intensive for the students to experience the kind of reading that is required for them to pass the FCAT Reading test. The program

focused on fluency, and while Mrs. Jones agrees that fluency is important, she does not see the importance of the weekly rate and accuracy tests:

> I know they need to read fluently, but how is that going to help them on the FCAT where they have to read long passages? The fluency tests are short passages. They are reading short passages in the reading lessons and the interruptions do not require the students to focus for long periods of time. [Field notes, Feb. 4, 2002]

The "interruptions" Mrs. Jones referred to were the "comprehension tasks" in the scripted lessons that are asked while reading. As noted in Chapter 5, the actual number of minutes students read aloud is minimal. The data support Mrs. Jones's claim and reflects a serious concern. In addition to the number of minutes the students read, the total quantity of text read daily is a concern:

> Field notes, Mar. 18, 2002: Reading aloud took ten minutes; half the time spent is questioning.
>
> Field notes, April 9, 2002: The entire passage is only 9 paragraphs long. There are 3 one-sentence paragraphs, 3 six-sentence paragraphs, 1 nine-sentence paragraph and 1 five-sentence paragraph. Twelve minutes total reading time; including questioning

Extended reading is not part of *Reading Mastery*. The time that students actually read in the class is, according to Mrs. Jones, unacceptable. She contends that the program *may* be beneficial for a group of students who work below grade level in reading, but it is not an appropriate program for on-level learners.

In summary, according to Mrs. Jones, *Reading Mastery* does not allow her to meet the needs of individual students. It does not allow her to use her knowledge and expertise regarding literacy instruction and development, nor does it allow sufficient time for extended engagement with reading. Furthermore, the script she is required to follow restricts her instruction and confines student remediation to rereading [4T1, May 16, 2002].

Table 6-4. Mrs. Jones according to Bascia & Hargreaves (2000)

Dimension and Description of Dimension	Evidence of Dimension in Data	Evidence of the Impact of Forced Change
Mrs. Jones Socioemotional "Teacher as Socializer" Continuous relationships with students, colleagues and communities are foundational to high-quality teaching and learning	Interacts with students, shares personal experiences and invites students to share personal experiences. Individualizes academic support, continuously working 1-1 with students addressing personal academic needs. Mrs. Jones had a continuously evolving schedule attempting to accommodate the learning needs of the class as she became accustom to teaching *Reading Mastery*.	Unpleasant interactions between teacher and students emerged when first implementing the program. The tension manifested itself in unusually rough comments from the teacher. Examples: After a student read, Mrs. Jones asked, "What did she refer to?" The student responded incorrectly, and Mrs. Jones comment, "No honey, you don't know what you are talking about. Are we reading the same story?" [Field notes, October 24, 2002] During a question/answer session, I record the following: "Confrontation between T and S about paying attention and being respectful. Tones very negative in both T and S. Tension obvious" [Field notes, Nov. 11, 2002].

Mrs. Jones emerges as the only teacher who exhibits a classroom community that focuses on the students, allows peer interaction, and personal sharing between the students and the teacher. This is not to imply that Mrs. Jones enjoys teaching *Reading Mastery*, or that she even tries to convince her students that she enjoys the program – she does not. Mrs. Jones's discontent manifests itself in uncharacteristically unpleasant interactions between her students and herself (see table). These occasional "outbursts" are most often centered around teaching *Reading Mastery* or preparation exercises for the FCAT testing.

Overall, Mrs. Jones creates a caring classroom community and works to foster a calm environment in her classroom. She fits the description of a socioemotional teacher.

Mrs. Jones does not reach the point that Bascia and Hargreaves (2000) found as the impact of forced change throughout her teaching. However, there is evidence of the forced change that support their claims while actively teaching *Reading Mastery*. Especially at the point of implementation, noticeable tension exists in the classroom.

The disconnection and deadened emotional understating between the teacher and the students described by Bascia and Hargreaves (2000) is evident in a number of interactions. Eventually, however, as Mrs. Jones acclimates herself to the program, these incidents disappear from her interactions. Once again, pleasant socializing returns. It is possible that Mrs. Jones's ability to retain her own conception of teaching and therefore more control over her teaching can be explained by the fact that Mrs. Jones did not teach *Reading Mastery* long enough to permanently change her teaching. She did not implement the program until October, allowing time at the beginning of the school year to build relationships with her students. Furthermore, this is Mrs. Jones's first experience teaching Reading Mastery, so she was not affected by comments Mr. Dovish made about improper implementation during the previous year.

It must be restated that these ideologies are data driven and based on interview data and observations conducted outside the reading block. All the teachers are forced into the technical model by the *Reading Mastery* program while implementing the program. *Reading Mastery* essentially requires no professional skills to execute, thinking is minimal as acceptable student responses are recorded in the presentation book. Teachers do not have to think along with the reading, they read the questions and answers the program provides. The administration imposed this curriculum on the teachers, the teachers are forced to adopt a functionalist methodology:

- All skills are run through the skill mill
- All texts are subjected to skill instruction (workbook activities)
- All texts are subjected to skill check-ups (comprehension checks)
- All opportunities to read are assignments

Teachers work in a system of rewards and punishment, where how well students score on high-stakes tests defines effective teaching.

In order to completely adopt the technical ideology, the teachers must believe in the transmission model of education. If the teachers in this study understood teaching as the transferring of knowledge from the teacher to the students, then the systematicity of *Reading Mastery* may have better fit their ideologies. However, as noted, the teachers do not use a transmission model of teaching for other content areas.

Summary

The 2001-2002 school year began with "C" grade assigned by the state and newly legislated policy that requires Mr. Dovish to fail third grade students who do not score above level one on the FCAT Reading test. To try to improve the test scores of the lower quartile students in his school, Mr. Dovish mandates *Reading Mastery*. His teachers, accustomed to collaborative decision-making, rebel. A climate of mistrust develops in the school, and the teachers are forced into their classrooms with an instructional method of which they do not approve. Although the teachers find many conflicts between how they are forced to teach and the way they would like to teach, they do implement the program required. What results are teachers who become technicians in classrooms where students have also taken either a passive role in learning, or worse, no role. At each level, control diminishes. The principal has lost control of decision-making and jeopardized his relationship with the faculty. The teachers have lost control over their

instruction and in two cases, their students. The students have lost control over their learning and their behavior.

CHAPTER 7
MANDATES: FOR-PROFIT POLICY PUSH

> Americans had better rethink the learning and competition experienced by our children. So many children are pushed to one side early in their learning careers when they are labeled as disabled or failures. Standardized tests have built-in failure rates of roughly 18 percent. Instead of learning to compete with themselves, children are asked to compete with all other children taking the test across the country. (Graves, 2002, p.21-22)

Summary of the Study

The current political climate in education is forcing change in literacy instruction, mandating programs and ways of teaching that are measured by student outcomes in the form of high-stakes tests (American Federation of Teachers, 1997; Elmore & Fuhrman, 2001; Goertz, 2001). These efforts to change have shifted the focus of education to student outcomes without taking into consideration what their affect is on the actual work within the classrooms (Allington, 2002; Allington & Woodside, 1999; Bascia & Hargreaves, 2000; Bloome & Harste, 2001; Cambourne, 2002; Kohn, 1999; Coles, 2000; Datnow & Castellano, 2000; Fu & Lamme, 2002; Guitierrez et. al., 2001; Kohn, 1999, 2000, 2002). What happens to the teachers and the students in classrooms has failed to be taken into consideration by policy-makers (Allington, 2002; Cohen, 2001; Kohn, 2000; Shannon, 2001) and no attention has been paid to the teachers' emotional needs in regards to teaching mandated curriculum (Cohen, 2001; Graves, 2001; Hargreaves, 1998).

Admittedly, current research is not perfectly clear about the direction reform should take in formal reading instruction (Flood & Langer, 1994; Langer, 1995; Pugach &

Warger, 1996; Skrtic, 1995), however this study stands as evidence that teachers should be part of the decision-making process in determining those future directions. Curriculum changes need to take teachers' perspectives into consideration and should not be controlled by those at a distance from the classrooms. Mandated policies that do not consider teachers' emotional connectedness to the act of teaching are currently common practice. As Hargreaves (1998) points out, "in so much reform-centered and change-centered writing about teaching and leading, it is as if educators only ever think, manage and plan in coldly calculative (and stereotypically masculine) ways. It is as if teachers (and indeed students) think and act but never really feel" (p. 837). This research shows that teachers do feel. And how they feel is critically important and directly connected to how they teach. To proceed through mandated reform without attending to the emotional aspect of teaching and learning is indeed a very dangerous approach.

Extensive research is needed to give a more complete picture of the impact imposed curriculum has on administrators, teachers and students. The complexity of this project forced a single researcher to set aside a few very important issues and focus on the urgency created by defining educational success in terms of high-stakes test scores. Issues raised in this research that need to receive the attention of future research include gender and the role it plays in imposed curriculum and research that describes reading instruction in action, especially scripted teaching and learning. We need descriptive studies that show the classrooms that emerge in schools that impose curriculum. We need to see the teaching and learning that results.

However, research of this nature takes time. Time that we do not have if we are concerned about the teachers and children who are currently caught in schools where

their voices have been silenced. The American people must act now to reverse the political interference and politicization of education policy. This research needs to be heeded as a wake-up call for every American citizen, for all of us are directly affected by national education policy. Learning in a high-stakes environment must receive instant attention. We cannot afford to wait for the children caught in today's system to mature so that we can analyze the effects of high-stakes testing on their ultimate contributions to our society at large. Reports of physical illness and stress-related disorders in children have already begun to surface (Altwerger and Straus, 2002). Teacher attrition rates are at an all-time high, and enrollment in colleges of education do not meet the growing needs of our increasing school population (Florida Department of Education, 2002b). Current measures in standards-based reform are not creating lasting, positive effects. They have created a national educational crisis.

This study shifts the focus of the century old reading wars to the reading instruction mandates that the policy-makers magnify (implementing skill-based programs based on claims that delivering the program will improve student test scores), to life in the classrooms that results from the mandates. It describes classrooms and a school environment that is a consequence of not making teachers part of the decision-making process and forcing them to execute curriculum. This study asks important questions that focus on human aspects of teaching and learning:

- What happens to instruction when it is mandated? What is the resulting context of student learning?
- What happens to teachers who are forced into an instructional program they did not choose? What emotional process do teachers go through attempting to provide literacy experiences for students in this kind of environment?

- Who is in control in schools where curriculum is mandated? Are the teachers able to retain some control over their curriculum? If so, what factors are enabling, if not, what factors act as blocks?

In order to answer these questions, the school environment was viewed from multiple perspectives. Observing the classrooms provided description of teaching and learning conditions for the students. Interviewing the teachers, both formally and informally provided data on the teachers' daily interactions with students, curriculum materials, and other faculty members over a five-month period. Formal interviews directly addressed the issues being investigated with the teachers. By asking direct questions, it was not necessary to infer their perspectives on the critical issues this research addresses. The perspectives belong to the teachers. Interviewing the administration allowed for the inclusion of the school's historical stance on reading instruction, the school climate from a perspective other than the teachers, and the principal's motivation in mandating curriculum.

Discussion

The teachers in this study are individuals, all with their own histories and beliefs that set them apart from each other. There are differences in the way mandated instruction manifests itself in their classrooms, yet within these differences, each teacher suffers from being required to teach in ways he/she did not approve. The common bond that holds the teachers together is their history at the school. The school's record of collaborative decision-making factors in heavily when discussing the results of this study, for these teachers experienced mandated curriculum for the first time during the year of this study. This study can only address the small part of the school's history that is shared by the participants, and therefore does not claim to represent its complete history or every teacher at the school.

Programs Don't Teach

Teachers teach. Throughout the presentation and analysis of classroom activity, this report carefully considers each use of the verb "to teach." In fact, *Reading Mastery's* circular definition of teaching is a theme in chapter 5. What is usually called a "teacher's manual" is called a "Presentation Book." What teachers usually refer to as "vocabulary instruction" is called "Word Attack Skills." Comprehension, usually taught as strategy instruction, is called "Group Reading" in the presentation book and is subtitled "Comprehension Tasks." For all intents and purposes, *Reading Mastery* does not teach reading.

The teachers could have worked within the structure of the *Reading Mastery* program, capitalizing on what it could bring to their students and compensating for what it lacked, but they were not allowed to make professional judgments to adjust the program to meet their students' needs. For example, Mrs. Phillips felt the program addressed vocabulary building in ways that benefited her students, but she would have preferred using *Reading Mastery* as only a part of the program and supplementing with novel-based instruction throughout the year. Mrs. Zeigler saw *Reading Mastery* as a strong, initial force that propelled students into more independence in reading as they transitioned to third grade, but inadequate for her students when it was used as the instructional program over a long period of time. Never the less, she was required to continue following the program until late in the school year. Mr. Wright, who was more able to adjust how he implemented the program, was still unable to use it in a way that he thought might be most beneficial. He thought the program used for a few minutes every day would benefit his students, where parts of the program could be used for direct

instruction, but he would still have time every day to work on intrinsic motivation, comprehension strategies, and help students develop a love of reading. Instead, they were closely monitored and required to adhere to the script.

Issues of Control

Whose fault is it that "teaching and learning" are replaced with "presentation and repetition" from *Reading Mastery* classrooms? Is it Mr. Dovish's fault for mandating a program that his district has adopted as a "proven program" that claims "the program will work with any student," or is it the district's fault for supporting the program in the first place? Or is the State of Florida at fault for their educational policies that promote test scores above all other measures of successful school experiences? This issue is one of control. The fault lies directly in those who control decision-making and educational policy that has filtered down from federal policy, to state policy, to district compliance.

The most important theme that emerges in this study is that of control. Federal and state educational policymakers are explicit in their intentions to control teachers by using a system of rewards and punishments based on student test scores. *Reading Mastery* is explicit in its intention to control teachers and language, and this study confirms the success of their plan. The fast pace of the program and the heavy reliance on behavior modification plays very well into policymakers' overall plan to control classrooms, but it does not meet the needs of the teachers or the students. Instead, it decontextualized language learning and reading, reducing the reading process to a series of isolated skill and drill assignments, and disempowers school-based administrators and educators, turning teachers into technicians. Teachers did not teach, they presented. Classrooms control was surrendered to policymakers. Those in control are also those at fault.

Debate is a Good Thing

At the heart of American politics is a two-party system that thrives on debate. The American people have always prided themselves on free press and freedom of speech. Debate has propelled our nation forward since its birth, and communication among and between people has been a foundation for progress. Communication, the exchange of ideas between individuals and groups of individuals, is at risk in the current education system. For decades, educational researchers have debated a number of issues concerning reading. The debates include topics related to reading, from its definition to how best to teach reading, and even what research should be used to support various claims. The federal government, in its recent action to place a single definition of reading into service (REA), to control the definition of reading research (NRP), and to support specific programs to teach reading (NCLB) are all efforts to close the debates.

Closing debate that naturally occurs when there is tension or disagreement also closes down communication about important issues. Communication is currently at risk at all levels of education. The consequences of this can be seen at Shoals. Mr. Dovish's communication differs on the two grade levels in this research, and different relationships develop because of it. The fourth grade teachers, though explicitly reprimanded, are better able to understand the imposed program as a curriculum decision. However, they are ordered to "act professionally" and comply with administrative demands without further expression of disagreement. The third grade teachers understand the imposed curriculum as a result of poor teacher performance. *Their* performance. This understanding is a result of off-handed accusations, not hard data or direct communication. It did not improve teacher performance.

Furthermore, in the classrooms described in this research, no genuine exchange of ideas between the teachers and the students takes place during reading lessons. Teachers are forced into the transmission model of teaching where they follow a script and students are expected to learn the single definition of a word and the single meaning of a text. Shoals develops "a subskill approach to reading, [where] a failure to read is attributed to a lack of skills, an insufficient self" (Block, 2000, p. 134). Students respond on cue and their ritualistic response patterns reveal no independent thought. With no exchange of independent thought, does communication exist?

We, as a nation, must ask: Why is there such an organized effort to close communication and take control of our schools away from the education community? Why aren't we listening to the teachers? Teachers know that children are not homogeneous. For that matter, neither are adults. We accept variations in *physical* development and performance of young children, why is it so hard to accept the idea that children also vary in *academic* development and performance? No one believes that all children who do not learn to walk before their first birthday should be placed in physical therapy! We also accept variations in adult career choices and performance. Should we stop seeing people as individuals and ask adult Americans to take turns performing various jobs and cycle in and out of every position in corporate America from maintenance worker to CEO? If not, then how can we possibly support an education system that treats all children and teachers the same? We are not the same. We have varied interests and abilities that are inherent in what it means to be human. How can we expect teachers to unilaterally execute scripted programs? How can we measure every

human mind using the same rigid test? Yet "sameness" is the theoretical foundation of standardization, high-stakes testing, and "No Child Left Behind" legislation.

State education policies have been redefined in ways that emphasize accountability, and "equity was reconceptualized as ensuring all students access to a high-quality educational program" (Goertz, 2001, p. 62). High-quality reading programs have been defined and identified by the Florida Department of Education and only those programs have been placed on the state approved textbook adoption list. Florida policy dictates (Florida Department of Education, 2003b) that "Florida schools and school districts must purchase adopted materials through the publisher's Florida depository" thus controlling the instructional materials used in Florida schools. For reading, six reading series are available for purchase. The two programs that Shoals' district adopted and fund are both skill-based, direct approaches to teaching reading leaving all teachers who believe reading should be taught from a comprehension-based approach no support or materials necessary to teach. According to Goertz, co-director of the Consortium for Policy Research in Education, when federal, state, and district policies converge, instructional procedures inevitably narrow. Tensions "between the federal, state, and local governments are at the heart of the variations in policy and practice" (p. 66). However, little tension exists between George W. Bush's federal education policies, Jeb Bush's state policy, and district policy for the district where Shoals is located. In Shoals' district, teachers no longer benefit from what debate or diversity might emerge from efforts to relieve tensions between divergent policies, and no amount of variability in instructional methods is acceptable.

Corporate and Political Interests

Theories have emerged that seek to explain the possible motivation of various groups behind the movement to take over the American educational system. Edelsky, a leading educator whose career has focused on enriching literacy experiences for all students, contends "literacy education is political because it ensures that some kids are going to continue their privilege and some aren't" (Altwerger, 2000, p. 169). Students who are taught there is one right answer and only one way to think will not develop the thinking power to rise out of the working class and challenge the ruling class. In her interview with Altwerger, Edelsky points to the inequities in our current system in regards to health care, transportation, and housing, noting schools are the next institution to successfully separate our society. Corporate interest in education enable "tying together campaign financing with the enormous influence of lobbyist [and] corporate publishers with researchers whose research is used to justify mandates to use materials from those publishers" (p. 172).

Altwerger and Strauss (2002) call attention to the power of corporate interests and the business sectors' active support of standardization and high-stakes accountability. Corporate interests support changes in education policy in order to further their own interests. The Business Round Table (BRT), a powerful group of CEOs, "positioned itself to turn its agenda for education into public policy, at both the state and national levels. It has entered into partnerships with state departments of education, and its members sit on national 'advisory' boards" (p. 257). The BRT's Education Task Force does not hide or mask its goals of "achieving systemic reform" by redefining educational success as "high standards" and "high-stakes testing" and to remove all debate and discussion of

divergent views (BRT, 2001). This approach alienates professional educators, blocking anyone who does not agree with the principles set forth by the BRT's agenda.

The BRT is most interested in global competition and increased profits, not the welfare or education of students. The profits generated from commercial materials produced by the textbook industry are strong motivators for those outside education to hold control over schools. McGraw-Hill, the company that produces *Reading Mastery* generated $4.8 billion in sales in 2002. (The McGraw-Hill Companies). Harold McGraw III, chairman and CEO of McGraw-Hill and a member of the BRT, is in a position to influence education policy and manipulate the market to increase company profits. Mr. McGraw is not an educator; he is a businessman. It should be noted that the mission of McGraw-Hill Publishers is not directed at the betterment of educational opportunities for children. The company's mission is to "Grow globally in financial services, Expand our global publishing operations, Increase our penetration of the global education market, Capitalize on opportunities in electronic commerce, [and] Grow our business-to-business information services and products" (The McGraw-Hill Companies). Nowhere do they claim to have an interest in children.

Teachers, on the other hand, do not think of corporate financial profit when they plan their curriculum. Teachers think about students. The four teachers in this study join teachers across the nation who are "concerned about high-stakes testing as it affects classroom practice" (Altwerger, 2000, p. 260). Teachers are negatively affected by the high-stakes testing and external control of the curriculum (Graves, 2001, 2002; Kohn, 1999, 2000; Ohanian, 1999) and Shoals' teachers are no exception. "When anybody in power decides to make choices for teachers, this results in deskilling of teachers, the

insistence that teachers need guardians and gatekeepers, and are incapable of making their own curriculum decision" (Ohanian, 1999, p. 99). As all teachers know, more pressure exerted to conform our teaching to fit the goals of high-stakes testing will result in the loss of more professional teachers. More students will suffer. And as this research reveals, the teachers suffer.

While these battles rage, the American people need to realize that our children are being sacrificed in order for political and economic forces to convince the people that our public schools are failing. But first they have to make them fail. The generation of students currently in elementary school is being raised on scripted programs, high-stakes tests and practice voucher programs. It is getting worse instead of better. High-stakes tests are ruining teachers, and they are leaving the profession at an ever-increasing rate. Teachers are leaving because they can no longer face the practices they are forced into by mandated education policies. Little light has been shed on how the teachers feel being professionally attacked day after day, year after year for over a decade of school restructuring based on standardization of curriculum. This research offers a small view of the damage that is currently infecting schools.

We teachers know how many of us are leaving public education. We know how many of our colleagues have given up. We know how much we have tried to hold on to our pedagogical practices in a storm of criticism. And we know that deep down, we cannot continue to try to help the most struggling students because their test scores, by nature of guaranteed rates of failure built into standardized tests, will never be high enough. We cannot give up our salaries, our job security *and* our right to teach.

And what about the children? I implore all the readers of this study to place their own children in a classroom forced to respond on cue to a dog training clicker. Better yet, place *yourself* in the room. Take away *your* freedom to wiggle and sit only in the "learning position." Forbid *yourself* from asking more than one question, for if you ask two, "you were not paying attention and need to go back and reread." Most of all, do not read anything that will not be evaluated (graded) or used to accumulate points. Absolutely NO self-selected reading allowed in school! And if *you* do not pass *your* reading test after a lifetime of this, too bad, *you* can stay in third grade until you are 16 when *you* can drop out. This will improve our nation's high school drop out rate, for more and more of *you* will never make it out of elementary school.

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Nancy received her B.A. from SUNY Albany, and her M.A. and Ed.S. from UF. She has taught elementary school in Gainesville, Florida, since 1992. Her interests include language theory and critical literacy.

I certify that I have read this study and that in my opinion it conforms to acceptable standards of scholarly presentation and is fully adequate, in scope and quality, as a dissertation for the degree of Doctor of Philosophy.

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I certify that I have read this study and that in my opinion it conforms to acceptable standards of scholarly presentation and is fully adequate, in scope and quality, as a dissertation for the degree of Doctor of Philosophy.

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